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THE BOOKMAN

A LETTER IN REPLY TO A YOUNG GENTLEMAN OF YALE UNIVERSITY

By William McFee

MY DEAR SIR:

I do not remember any letter among the many I have received from Americans which has given me so much pleasure as yours, or which has led me to scrutinize so narrowly the understructure of the career of authorship. I like your letter, not only because you reveal the engaging candor that seems to me to be in the New Haven air, not only because your calligraphy is so exquisitely lucid and attractive to a jaded eye, but because you are one of a numerous company of young Americans who have honored me with their letters and who have all endeared themselves to my memory by a singularly charming and slightly antique style of writing. And it is of that I would speak at first.

I am not unmindful that most of you come from New England, though several who are tinged with this eighteenth century turn of phrase and attitude of mind hail from distant colleges. It is my desire to congratulate you upon preserving, in a syncopating era of the world, those decencies of word and thought which, in my opinion, are a not unpleasant feature of civilization.

It will be difficult, of course, for me to extract from your letter adequate examples of what I mean without quoting some of those graceful compliments that you have so ingeniously embedded in the text. But I can attempt it.

"How my dear Sir", you say, "did you begin to write? I have read a partial account in one of your books and have picked up strands here and there from time to time. Did you 'write and burn' as Joseph Conrad advised all undergraduates here a few days ago. And again, — you see I am a human question mark — do you think travel necessary to a good writer? Are newspapers advisable as a means of sharpening style; I mean

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of course, writing for them — no one would read them for literary merit. You see I am seriously considering the literary life — not really considering it because I can't possibly keep out of it, i. e. when desire and not ability is the criterion — and have had considerable difficulty in matters to write about. Life, I suppose, is teeming all around me, and yet my experience is confined to a few adolescent amours. . . . . Do you think it necessary to be old to write a novel?"

Here, I think, we have the main spring and alarm of your interrogative epistle. At all events it was this paragraph that gave me most reason for taking a retrospect of the road over which I have been traveling for twenty-five years.

It is of course quite unnecessary for you, as a young undergraduate, to apologize for such questions as being possibly "impertinent". That is very polite on your part, but permit me to waive it as unnecessary. Such questions are in the highest degree pertinent. Upon what rational plea can an author resent them? He is an artist, he works for the public pleasure and edification, and by these tokens the youth of the land who desire to be instructed in the art have every right to ask his counsel. And so we come to your first question — how does one begin to write?

I assume, young sir, that you have more than once turned away from those empty and windy nostrums that are at times sent floating about the literary causeways by folk who are — to put it humanely — not very scrupulous in their thinking. As for instance, that the way to learn to write is to write. Or that writing, like anything else, is a trade. You know the sort of thing. Even the perfectly sound and valuable advice that you quote — "to write and burn", is open to the criticism that it reverberates in young hearts like the clang of a heavy door closing, rather than the cheerful rattle of an opening casement.

I can offer you none of these formidable and epigrammatic instruments for penetrating the veils that conceal the mysteries of our art. All I can do is to light a candle and lead the way back along the corridors of memory to the magic period when, like you, I was afflicted with the passion for writing and yet had, as you phrase it so felicitously, "considerable difficulty in matters to write about".

And who has not? My first word is entirely of encouragement. I think myself it is a wise provision of nature that when we are young we lack power. Life, you suppose, is teeming all around you and yet your experience is confined to a few adolescent amours. Well, the other amours will come along in due course, and although I am not one of those who hold that art is merely a manifestation of sex, falling in love is undoubtedly a factor in the problem. But in the beginning I imagine that writing, or music, or the plastic arts, come to us unconsciously, growing out of the universal instinct for imitation.

So I recall it, rather ruefully I may tell you. Of course, you may be informed by the modern school of psychology that I am wrong, that my memories are suspect, and that it is all a question of glands. Perhaps it is. But to me it is a picture of a small boy reading and reading and reading, much of it reading aloud to a shrewd and competent mother, and then the instinctive act of taking a pen and imitating the phrases and emotions for himself.

We can get a hint of the mechanism of literary inception, I think,

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from the fact that a boy — or a girl — tends to grandiose themes — the invention of improbable regions and gigantic beings, of horrors and sheeted fantoms. It is my own theory that our imaginations, like our bodies, pass rapidly through the whole gamut of evolutionary phases during adolescence. There is a period at the threshold of the introspective life, when the mind is scarcely differentiated from sensation, and the things imagined are as crude as the sagas. It is of these early spiritual contortions and monstrous inventions that the fairy stories are made, and which give them their power over every generation.

The next stage, however, is much more interesting to you and to me, since it takes place in the world of living men. You ask how one begins to write. Well, there are two sources of inspiration, and it is because one or other of them is forgotten in the excitement of the controversy that one derives so little profit from the precepts of eminent artists. For if dreams are the indispensable basis of the act of creation, our life in this world is the mold into which most of us must run our thoughts. I do not deny that there are masters of pure fantasy, poets of the calibre of Francis Thompson and William Butler Yeats, who move with singular ease and beauty among legends of ancient days, prose writers like De Quincey and William Blake, who float clear of our earthly levels and entrance our souls, and who, as Goethe says in Faust, "beckon to far-off shores with smiles from other skies."

But you and I had better keep our feet on the ground yet awhile, I think, and since the problem is the genesis of authorship, we may describe it as the imitative instinct acting upon the intimate external world of action.

And here it is proper to put in a plea for the gentlemen who are lying in wait for you, and who will demand with wistful doggedness an abundance of that same action. One of the most difficult things in the world, to my mind, is to sit down and tell a child an impromptu story. And why? Well, because the child wants us to tell it what happened. We have to invent action. The story a child makes up for itself is all action. There was once a little girl and she was crying because she had been invited to a lovely ball, and her mother said she couldn't go because she was naughty. And while she was crying suddenly a little old woman came up the garden path, a little old woman dressed in a blue cloak and with a basket on her arm full of — and so on. That is the way a child makes up a story, and with very little modification that is what you will have to do to pacify those estimable and warm hearted editors who will insist upon something happening in your stories. The principle behind this apparently despotic demand is an eternal one. It is nothing less than the practical application of the theory that writing is an art. I am aware that modern critical jargon tends to confuse this issue and proclaims that since life is apparently formless and incomprehensible, a novel should develop along those lines. But I would here quote Goethe again, and remark in passing that the more you read that remarkable genius the better. In "Wilhelm Meister", he observes drily that "art is called art because it is not nature", and I suggest you never forget it.

The editor, then, who insists upon action in the story, who wants you, as a modern critic naïvely puts it, to begin at the beginning and end at the end, to have it clear in your mind be-

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fore you begin to tell it, is merely requiring you to be an artist. The notion that a story leaps into existence, like Minerva springing full armed from the head of Jove, is attractive but not founded upon experience. I am inclined myself to accept the personal narratives of inspired authors with a grain of salt. You may "get an idea", as they say, and write it at white heat in a few hours. But I very much doubt whether it will be worth much after you have written it. This illusion of rapid creation is fostered by the fact that conceptions do actually come to one in a flash and at the most unexpected moments. But I would point out that the artist's mind, in these cases, is continuously preoccupied with his theme: his story, as I am fond of saying, is cooking over a slow fire, day after day, week after week, perhaps for years, before he experiences these authentic and sudden revelations of the minor syntheses. You will discover infinitely more comfort and nourishment in my own favorite theory of growth. Art is fundamentally a product of meditation. We are apt to lose sight of this point because all the machinery of modern publishing, even the vocabulary of literary processes, tends to conceal the gradual inception, the years of silent gestation, the travail of soul, that precede all genuine achievements in the imaginative sphere. It flatters our vanity to have people think we dashed it off. We are anxious to avoid any suspicion of being irresponsible loafers and so we sit at our desks every day at certain hours, exactly as though we were engaged in merchandising. Now industry is as important in authorship as in any other department of life, but it cannot be regulated quite so deftly as that. Nevertheless I am not about to deliver any vaporings concerning inspiration. My idea, derived from a rather strenuous pursuit of hard manual labor and executive responsibility far removed from writing, is that success even in bench work say, is very much a matter of inspiration. Else, how can one account for those days when a job is done by magic, when work moves forward in oiled grooves, and you reflect with amazement at the facility of your achievement? The artizan is as much the victim of temperament and inspiration as the artist, but the convention is that only the latter can claim it, and there I think the convention is wrong.

Your question, however, "did you 'write and burn' ", can be answered boldly and without any loss of honor. It is the lot of mankind 'to write and burn', but I am unable to recall any formal pyre. There appears to be a ritual in these matters. The sight of the burning pages vanishing up the chimney seems to exercise a soothing and propitiatory influence upon the spirit that presides over such functions. I am unable to attribute any peculiar significance to the actual incineration of one's prentice work, though I confess to standing by the rail at night and dropping it overboard. The fact is, an apprentice, whether to authorship or cabinet making or blacksmithing, makes many "wasters" that have to be destroyed, or at least stowed away out of sight. To make it a romantic and semireligious gesture is to my mind a foolish thing to do. There need be no regret if you derived pleasure from the writing and profit from the disillusion that followed.

The next interrogation, whether travel is "necessary to a good writer", is full of danger for one who has been

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about the world more or less and whose work bears the mark of so many alien impressions. The cobbler believes there is nothing like leather. But candor demands that a fair judgment be delivered, and it must be confessed that while travel is desirable to reach a wide culture and a trained eye, it is by no means essential to the creation of great art. Indeed, I am able to make an excellent case for the writer who stays right in his home town. I can recall to your memory Robert Burns, for example, Mrs. Gaskell and Thomas Hardy. Perhaps Hardy is of all modern masters of prose the best example of the artist who has achieved his greatest triumphs at his own door. But I need not labor this point. You will be able to think of many others, like Flaubert and Maupassant in Rouen, George W. Cable in New Orleans, Arthur Machen in his garret in London, who have gone neither to China nor Peru. There is no greater fallacy than that romance lies on the other side of the world. And just as he who is a failure in business at home may imagine success beyond the ranges, so the artist who sees nothing in his native vale may dream of masterpieces conceived in the shadow of the Andes. Each is the victim of an illusion. They seek neither wealth nor fame, but the satisfaction of that strange migratory instinct —

> For to admire an' for to see,
> For to be'old this world so wide —
> It never done no good to me,
> But I can't drop it if I tried.

Be very sure indeed it is not that, rather than art, which propels you from port to port.

It is with the next query, as to the use of newspapers, that I must offer, in all sincerity and honest regard, an adverse criticism. Are they "advisable as a means of sharpening style", you ask, adding, rather to my annoyance, "I mean of course, writing for them — no one would read them for literary merit." Now I am unable to understand how writing for a newspaper can be good for a style if you can't read them for literary merit. On the contrary, I am happy to inform you that I am a voracious reader of newspapers, of magazines, of house organs, and of advertisements. I am of the opinion that never was newspaper writing of so high a standard as at the present moment, and that your average morning or evening journal in America far transcends anything to be found elsewhere. With a few exceptions, such as, for example, an essay on the chemical nature of Water Soluble B., or a libelous attack upon an honored citizen, the metropolitan dailies will print and pay for articles upon any subject under the sun. The curiosity and enthusiasm of the editors are insatiable, and the better you write the better they will like it. So vast and so heterogeneous is the available market that no ready writer need be idle or impoverished.

For the forming of taste, however, there is something to be said for moderation in reading the papers. The reason is obvious. Children should be sparingly supplied with rich food. They should have an abundance of staples. Here we might allude to a question I have frequently seen in the correspondence columns of magazines devoted to "red-blooded stories for he-men", as they are sometimes called. These correspondents are usually the husky students of some western university and they demand ruthlessly why their courses at college contain so much dry stuff about old has-beens

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like Chaucer and Spenser, Shakespeare and Wordsworth. Why, they ask, can they not take a course in modern authors? And here they mention the writers who appeal to them most strongly in their favorite magazine. I suspect the professors whom you disparage so disdainfully in your letter would ignore such suggestions. I think it more to the purpose, not being a professor, to answer the question. The reason why we must acquire a knowledge of those old "has-beens" (as one indignant westerner calls them) is that nothing can be done in any profession without a standard. The whole business of education beyond the elements is designed, not to fill the brains with facts as a bin is filled with beans, but to fashion in the mind an instrument by which a work of art or literature can be gauged. Only by means of this gauging, this trained instinct for fineness, can we attain to the permanent enjoyments of life. It is, in a measure, discipline and drill. The "wild ass of the desert" doubtless enjoys life in his own way, but our civilization and culture are built up on the theory that "the acquired memories of the artist", as La Farge phrased it, are of value, and the only way to acquire memories is to read what has been done.

The practice, however, of deliberately imitating certain models, "playing the sedulous ape" as R. L. S. called it, I don't regard with any enthusiasm. I am aware Stevenson did it himself, and Walter Pater devoted long periods to translating from foreign tongues into the English of some admired master. Whether they profited by this course it is not possible to declare. In a general way the young writer imitates in spite of himself, and unconsciously. He will have his "periods". He will drink deep of Ruskin or Carlyle, Emerson or Keats, and industriously bay the moon in these various styles, happily oblivious that the style is only the mark of the character and not to be copied. The use of these early exercises is to give suppleness of movement. It was a rule when I was taught cricket that the business of playing the ball, the stance, the swing, the muscular effort of the stroke, had to be practised until, when at the wicket, the whole operation took place with the precision of instinct. It had to be relegated to the subconscious mind, as in operating an automobile at high speed, let us say. And one of the marks of a good writer, to my mind, is that he gets his results in this way. The phrase, the paragraph, the chapter, grow in his mind in orderly and largely unconscious sequence, not because he has had an inspiration from on high, but because he has been practising the swing until it has become second nature.

Here I might make a brief plea for the paragraph in particular. It fell to my lot, not long since, to read a book of considerable recent fame. The energy and personal magnetism of the author were incontestable. His life, which he elected to recount in the form of fiction, was a miracle of tempestuous and emotional uproar. One of the prevailing conceits of his character was that he was above all things an artist. And yet the book was one of the most difficult I have ever read, because the author had not the remotest conception of balance and rhythm. The book had divisions neither of chapter nor paragraph. Everything was hurled down upon the paper pellmell and spattered with rows of the little dots which Mr. H. G. Wells used so deftly in some of his

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books, and which his imitators abuse so cruelly. The result was a constant strain upon the nerves. The mind was kept at full stretch so long that attention sagged and was finally severed. The material was there, piled up and chaotic, but the artist was unaware that he had not finished his job. Doubtless he would seek justification in the trend of modern literature, which seems to regard with impatience the minor but admirable task of fashioning the *mot-juste*, the pregnant phrase, and welding them into the cadence of the paragraph.

"Do you think it necessary to be old to write a novel?" you ask, and I am aware of the pathos in that question. I am aware of it all the more poignantly because I see on my desk, as I write, the manuscript of a novel written by a young lady of seventeen. It is an excellent story of its kind and she is becomingly modest about her achievement. Neither she nor I would admit that any special virtue attaches to precocity. The word "novel" covers so many kinds of composition, we are entitled to persevere until extreme old age.

I would venture, with your permission, to advance a proposition which is the fruit of experience, that in the beginning equipment is of more importance than ephemeral acceptance for publication. There is nothing in life or in art that is unimportant to the novelist. All is grist that comes to his mill. His culture cannot be too wide, or his reading too various. Sooner or later the apparently sterile stuff will be of service, will fructify and grow. He must have, to quote La Farge again, an abundance of "acquired memories". He is, more than most of us care to admit, very like the fabricator of a mosaic. The fingers of his mind are forever reaching back into the heaps of colored fragments in the store rooms, trying to make them fit his design, discovering a piece of unusual shape or tint, and modifying the design to bring it in. And then, when it is all in, in the rough, it must be cemented, and scoured, and smoothed, and polished.

Am I depressing? Do I present to your youthful imagination a series of perilous ascents to the hills of fair renown? That is not my design, at all events. I am not unmindful of the charming confidence you have reposed in my omniscience and I consider it an honorable charge to give the best counsel in my power. "There is no Excellent Beauty that hath not some Strangeness in the Proportion" is an epigram I commend to your careful attention. We shall assume that you are sufficiently intelligent to understand what Lord Bacon meant when he said it. And in turning over in my mind that part of your letter in which you say you are so seriously considering the literary life that you are unable to keep out of it, it occurs to me to repeat what I have already said in some place, that the best training for literature is to take up something else. And by that I mean you will become more easily a thinker, which is indispensable to the artist, if you get your store of "acquired memories" by way of a settled and secular calling. Perhaps the further removed from literature the better, as Keats was a druggist, you will remember, and Bunyan a tinker. So you will secure for yourself a means of living and a long apprenticeship.

And now, as I look back over the pages I have written and the years I have lived, I am not sure I have given you the key after all! I am not confident, I fear, that I know just what art is or how it can be defined. For

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that is your need. If we could only find a nice, concise, and noncorroding definition, how happy we should be! I am reminded by that of one I read many years ago, incongruous enough in its origin, for George Gissing could, by no stretch of word meanings, be said to have had a great deal of joy. But in that wonderful little book he wrote toward the end, "The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft", a book that was like the last sudden roseate glow in a sombre western sky after a stormy day, he gives us his creed, that art is the expression of the joy in life.

I offer it to you with reservations. It has many votaries and will serve you for a few years. But at the back of my mind I think the truth is more subtle than Gissing suspected, fine artist that he was. For it may be doubted if a human being saturated with the joy of life, a perfectly happy person, could create anything at all. Indeed Gissing's own life affords evidence that one of the most potent incentives to the creation of works of art is grief, sorrow. I do not mean that we should be forever composing lamentations, but that grief is a lens of extraordinary power through which we can behold the workings of our own hearts.

Perhaps now you see the point toward which I have been working — that your book or your poem, if it is to have any appeal at all, must be a product of your character. All the long weary road you are about to travel, the slow accretion of "acquired memories", the perception of analogies and the comprehension of the mechanism of metaphor, are but the preliminary skirmishes in the great business of becoming a writer. And when you have learned your trade as apprentice and improver, when you have grown inured to the singular fact that no measure of acceptance can ever destroy the anxiety in your heart because your work is not better, then perhaps you may begin cautiously to regard yourself as an artist. And the test is this — that in darkness and trouble, when the amenities of life are withdrawn, when love and friendship are uncertain, you can turn to your writing and find therein an indestructible consolation.

LINES WRITTEN ON THE FLY LEAF OF AN OLD BOOK

By Basil Thompson

HEREIN lieth a dead fellow,
Hereon writeth a quick,
Time, egad, with his tongue in his cheek
Hath turned a pretty trick.

The lad of the book lives on, lives on
In the blithe things he said,
But the quick lad who scriveneth here
Is a long space dead.

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A FOUNTAIN, A BOTTLE, A DONKEY'S EARS, AND SOME BOOKS

By Robert Frost

OLD Davis owned a solid mica mountain
In Dalton that would some day make his fortune.
There'd been some Boston people out to see it:
And experts said that deep down in the mountain
The mica sheets were big as plate glass windows.
He'd like to take me there and show it to me.

"I'll tell you what you show me. You remember
You said you knew the place where once on Kinsman
The early Mormons made a settlement
And built a stone baptismal font outdoors—
But Smith or someone called them off the mountain
To go west to a worse fight with the desert.
Well take me there."

"Some day I will."

"Today."

"Huh, that old bathtub, what is that to see?
Let's talk about it."

"Let's go see the place."

"To silence you, I'll tell you what I'll do:
I'll find that fountain if it takes all summer
And both of our united strengths to do it."

"You've lost it then?"

"Not so but I can find it.
No doubt it's grown up some to woods around it.
The mountain may have shifted since I saw it
In eighty-five."

"As long ago as that?"

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"If I remember rightly it had sprung
A leak and emptied then. And forty years
Can do a good deal to bad masonry.
You won't see ary Mormon swimming in it.
But you have said it, and we're off to find it.
Old as I am I'm going to let myself
Be dragged by you all over everywhere—"

"I thought you were a guide."

"I am a guide,
And that's why I can't decently refuse you."

We made a day of it out of the world,
Ascending to descend to reascend.
The old man seriously took his bearings,
And spoke his doubts in every open place.

We came out on a look-off where we faced
A cliff, and on the cliff a Bottle painted,
Or stained by vegetation from above,
A likeness to surprise the thrilly tourist.

"Well if I haven't brought you to the fountain,
At least I've brought you to the famous Bottle."

"I won't accept the substitute. It's empty."

"So's everything."

"I want my fountain."

"I guess you'd find the fountain just as empty.
And anyway this tells me where I am."

"Hadn't you long suspected where you were?"

"You mean miles from that Mormon settlement?
Look here, you treat your guide with due respect
If you don't want to spend the night outdoors.
I vow we must be near the place from where
The two converging slides, the avalanches,
On Marshall look like Donkey's Ears.
We may as well see that and save the day."

"Don't Donkey's Ears suggest we shake our own?"

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"For God's sake, aren't you fond of viewing nature?
You don't like nature. All you like is books.
What signify a Donkey's Ears and Bottle,
However natural? Give you your books!
Well then, right here is where I show you books.
Come straight down off this mountain just as fast
As we can fall and keep a-bouncing on our feet.
It's Hell for knees unless done Hell-for-leather."

"Be ready", I thought, "for almost anything."

We struck a road I didn't recognize,
But welcomed for the chance to lave my shoes
In dust once more. We followed this a mile,
Perhaps, to where it ended at a house
I didn't know was there. It was the kind
To bring me to for broad-board paneling.
I never saw so good a house deserted.

"Excuse me if I ask you in a window
That happens to be broken," Davis said.
"The outside doors as yet have held against us.
I want to introduce you to the people
Who used to live here. They were Robinsons.
You must have heard of Clara Robinson,
The poetess who wrote the book of verses
And had it published. It was all about
The posies on her inner window sill,
And the birds on her outer window sill,
And how she tended both, or had them tended:
She was 'shut in' for life. She lived her whole
Life long in bed, and wrote her things in bed.
I'll show you how she had her sills extended
To entertain the birds and hold the flowers.
Our business first's up attic with her books."

We trod uncomfortable on crunching glass
Through a house stripped of everything
Except, it seemed, the poetess's poems.

Books I should say! — if books are what is needed.
A whole edition in a packing case
That overflowing, like a horn of plenty,
Or like the poetess's "heart of love",
Had spilled them near the window toward the light
Where driven rain had wet and swollen them.
Enough to stock a village library —
Unfortunately all of one kind, though.

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They had been brought home from some publisher,
And taken thus into the family.
Boys and bad hunters had known what to do
With stone and lead to unprotected glass.
Shatter it inward on the unswept floors.
How had the tender verse escaped their outrage?
By being invisible for what it was,
Or else by some remoteness that defied them
To find out what to do to hurt a poem.
Yet oh, the tempting flatness of a book
To send it sailing out the attic window
Till it caught wind, and, opening out its covers,
Tried to improve on sailing like a tile
By flying like a bird (silent in flight,
But all the burden of its body song)
Only to tumble like a stricken bird
And lie in stones and bushes unretrieved.
Books were not thrown irreverently about.
They simply lay where someone now and then,
Having tried one, had dropped it at his feet
And left it lying where it fell rejected.
Here were all those the poetess's life
Had been too short to sell or give away.

"Take one," Old Davis bade me graciously.

"Why not take two or three?"

"Take all you want.
Good looking books like that." He picked one fresh
In virgin wrapper from deep in the box,
And stroked it with a horny-handed awe.

He read in one and I read in another,
Both either looking for or finding something.

The attic wasps went missing by like bullets.

I was soon satisfied for the time being.

All the way home I kept remembering
The small book in my pocket. It was there.
The poetess had sighed, I knew, in heaven
At having eased her heart of one more copy —
Legitimately. My demand upon her,
Though slight, was a demand. She felt the tug.
In time she would be rid of all her books.

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THE PARODY OUTLINE OF LITERATURE

XI: HAMLET*

By Floyd Dell

Illustrated by Herb Roth

THE clock in the city hall tower struck midnight raucously. The counter man in Joe's restaurant across the street, dozing in his chair, awoke, and started to take off his apron. From behind the door he heard the snores of the kitchen man. "Hey, Bill!" he called. "Wake up! It's twelve o'clock. I guess there won't be anybody else coming in now, and we can shut up the dump and go home."

At this moment the front door opened, and two young men entered, stamping the snow from their feet. They had on overcoats of an expensive cut that seemed to mark them as boys home from college for the holidays. But the taller of the two, as he turned down his overcoat collar, revealed a flowing black tie such as nobody had ever dared to wear in Elsinore, Denmark County, Wisconsin. The counter man stared at it curiously.

"A cup of coffee and a piece of pie", said one of the young men, the one whose tie, with blue diagonal stripes, conformed to the counter man's standards of what was right and normal. He turned to his companion for approval, and then added to the counter man, "Make it two."

"What kind of pie?" asked the counter man, sullenly, putting on his apron again.

"What kind of pie have you?" the young man inquired.

"Apple, mince, punkin."

The young man turned to his companion. "What do you say?"

"It is so difficult to choose", said the other, frowning. "Apple, mince —"

"You may omit the pie", said his friend hastily to the counter man. "Give us the coffee."

The counter man half filled two heavy cups with pale milk, and then put them under the spigot of the coffee boiler. He pushed them across the counter.

"I think I'd rather have mine black", complained the tall young man with the flowing tie.

"Well, why didn't you say so?" growled the counter man, and jerked the cup away. He filled another cup.

"On second thought, perhaps I'd better have some milk in it after all", said the young man with the flowing tie, looking at it doubtfully. To his friend he added, "I guess I'm drinking too much black coffee; that may account for my sleeplessness. What do you think, Horatio?" He turned abruptly to the counter man. "I don't suppose you have any cream?"

The counter man leaned on his elbow and regarded the young man

This is the eleventh instalment of the series in which various American authors, using well known tales, attempt to parody themselves.

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with weary scorn. "Say, what do you think this is—the Hotel Vanderbilt in Noo York?"

"No," said the young man, "and that's the odd thing." He was addressing, not the counter man, but his companion. "The cream all does seem to go to New York — and in the county seat of Denmark County, Wisconsin, famed throughout the middle west for its herds, you can't get a spoonful of real cream for your coffee!"

The counter man ranged the two cups formally side by side. "Here," he said, "take your choice — with or without." He spoke with easy, tolerant humor now, for he thought the young fellow showed signs of being intoxicated, and he had a fellow feeling for those in that happy state. He always got well pickled, himself, on his night off.

"Ah — another choice!" said the young man thoughtfully. "Life is like that — full of alternatives. One is always having to make decisions!"

"Oh, take them both", urged his friend, impatiently.

"You speak like a man of action", was the reply. "Horatio, I envy you. My father was like that — a man of action. But I — I can't take life that way. I must choose. Black coffee, or coffee with milk; with or without — that is the question. To stay awake, or sleep; to sleep, perchance to dream. . . . Horatio, do you believe in dreams?"

Horatio frowned, and looked at his friend critically. He had heard that H. 2d had been acting queerly since he came home from college for the holidays. He always had been a little queer, perhaps; but an awfully nice fellow, for all that. . . .

H. 2d was speaking again — ignoring the counter man, who stood waiting. "Do you know anything about psychical research?" he asked.

"What do you mean? Table tipping, and all that sort of thing? Spooks?" Horatio's face held an expression of extreme distaste.

"Well, you know there are lots of scientists who believe in it", asserted H. 2d. "They've discovered something they call ectoplasm. . . ."

"You don't mean to tell me that you've been seeing ghosts?" asked Horatio, anxiously.

"A man can't help it if he sees a ghost, can he?" asked H. 2d, fretfully. "He doesn't do it on purpose!"

"No — but he can go on and pay no attention to it."

"Oh, he can, can he?" H. 2d laughed bitterly. "I wish you'd seen what I've seen!"

"My sister-in-law seen a ghost oncet", said the counter man confidentially.

H. 2d ignored the interruption. "Tell me," he said, addressing Horatio, "what do you think of my —my stepfather?"

Horatio glanced in embarrassment at the counter man. "Oh, he's all right, I guess. Come on, Hamlet, let's take our coffee and sit down."

"Yes", said Hamlet, "I hear that he's managed the company very well since my father's death. Everyone seems to think well of him. Especially my — but never mind that. Tell me — do you hear any gossip about my father's death?"

Horatio again cast a glance at the counter man, and said, "Let's sit down."

"Yes, fer cat's sake, drink yer coffee", said the counter man, "and give a fellow a chancet to get home. This ain't no all night restaurant. I got to get some sleep."

"There's something in what he says,

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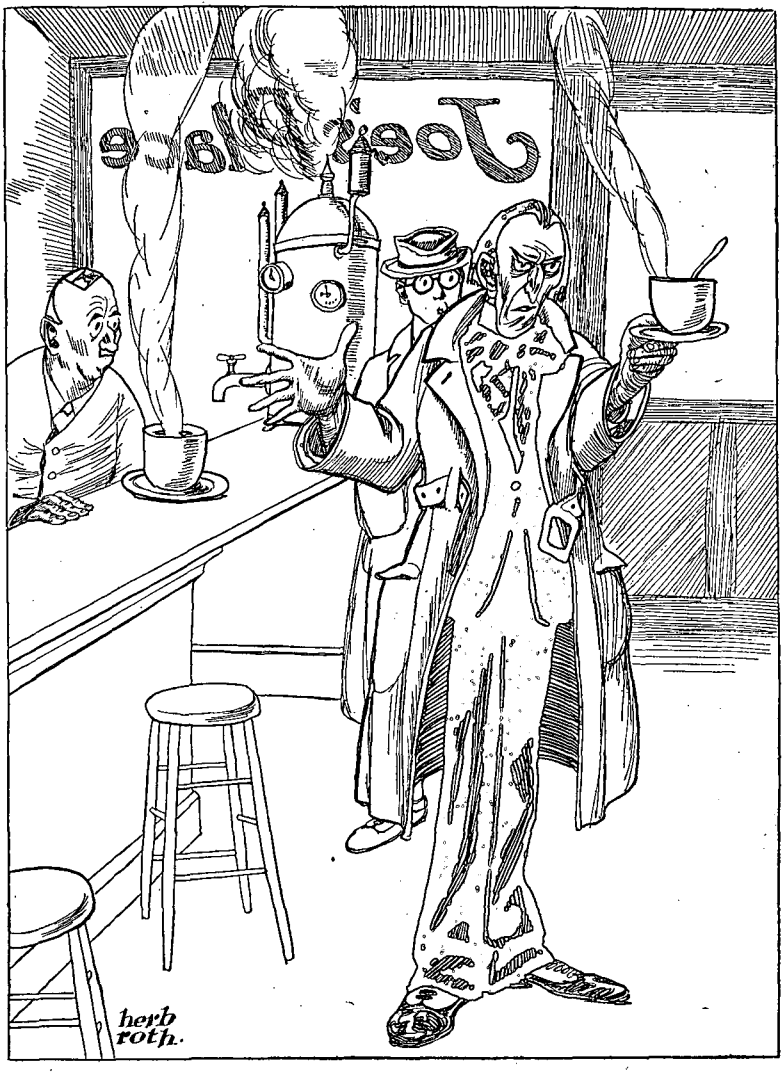

"With or without — that is the question"

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Horatio; but as to the coffee — really I can't decide which —"

"Oh, let's get out of here", said Horatio, and taking his friend by the arm, he started to the door.

"Hey!" said the counter man. "You ain't paid me fer them coffees!"

Horatio paused, took a coin from his pocket, and flipped it whirling in the air over the counter. Then he proceeded to the door with his friend.

The counter man caught the coin, and pocketed it. He looked at the young man who was being urged out of the door. "A nut", he said. Then he paused thoughtfully. "Some people would say not", he added, "but I say he's a nut."

II

The two young men were standing in the snow outside, talking. They had been there for half an hour.

"I wouldn't talk that way about my mother if I were you, Hamlet", his friend was saying. "It might be misunderstood. I know how you feel, old man. A mother is . . . an ideal, sort of — you know what I mean. Still, she's a human being. And she's got a right to marry again, if she wants to. Your mother's still a young woman, you know."

"Oh, yes, I know", and Hamlet sighed. "I suppose you think I'm crazy. Perhaps I am. Do you think I'm crazy, Horatio?"

"No, of course not", Horatio said laughingly. "You're all right. You've been studying too hard, I guess, and not taking enough exercise. Your mother's very much worried about the way you behave — and Ophelia is too. You've got to brace up."

"Ophelia — yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. . . ." said Hamlet.

"There you go again! Is it true — what everybody's saying — that you've broken your engagement to her?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know?"

"Good night, Horatio", said Hamlet — and abruptly walked away, leaving his friend staring after him.

III

Mr. Polonius, the elderly lawyer, having finished his customary hour's reading in a volume of dull memoirs, was going about the house to see that the doors were locked. As he did so, he saw a man out in the street, looking up at the house. He took extra pains to bolt the doors securely, and then went up to bed. As he passed his daughter's room, he saw a streak of light under the door. "Phelie!" he called to her severely, "it's too late for you to be reading. Put up that book, whatever it is, and go to sleep, do you hear?"

"Yes, father", came the reply. There was a click, the streak of light disappeared, and Polonius passed on to his own room.

Within her room a bobbed haired girl sitting at a table turned on the light again, and resumed her reading. The book must have interested her greatly. It was a very thick book — a book with a learned and scientific air — not at all the sort of book one would expect a flapper to sit up late at night reading. But then, one can never tell about these flappers.

IV

It was no use, Hamlet realized, to try to talk to Horatio. Horatio was his friend. He had imagination. He wasn't like those 100-percenters, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz, who didn't know the war was over yet. But there were many things in heaven and earth not dreamed of in Horatio's philosophy. How could he tell Hora-

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tio that he had seen a ghost — his dead father's ghost — and received a ghostly command to revenge his death upon his murderer! Horatio would tell him that the whole thing was the product of a fevered fancy. . . . Perhaps it was. He wanted to think so. He didn't want to believe that his uncle — his mother's new husband — had killed his father. It was too terrible to think of. Perhaps the whole thing had been merely a dream. . . . He found himself in front of Ophelia's house, and looked up at a lighted window. That was her room. She was awake. He wanted to tell her. . . .

V

Ophelia marked a passage with a pencil, and turned the page. Suddenly there came a tapping at the window pane. She was startled, but not frightened. She went immediately to the window, drew back the curtains, and looked out. A man was standing there.

But still she was not frightened, for she recognized the man. She opened the window, and said in a low indignant voice:

"Hamlet! What are you up to now? This is too ridiculous! My father will hear you."

"That meddlesome old fool!" said Hamlet.

"Go away at once", said Ophelia.

"I want to talk to you", he said.

"Well, this is a pretty time to come. . . . What did you do? Shin up the porch? Are you drunk?"

"No — I want to talk to you. I want to explain —"

"I should think you would want to explain! Everybody is saying that you've broken our engagement — and you haven't been near me since you came home — and now —!"

"Listen, Ophelia —"

"Hush — there's my father now! Beat it!"

"Farewell, Ophelia!"

"Wait!" She rushed to the table, picked up the big book, came back and thrust it into his hands. "Read it", she whispered. "Especially pages 117 to 234. I'll see you later!" And she shut the window.

"Ophelia!" came her father's voice at the door.

She went over and opened the door. "Yes, father?"

The old man looked inside suspiciously. He was a comical figure in his flannel dressing gown, with a flashlight in his hand, and his grey hair rumpled up around the bald spot on his head; she could hardly keep from smiling.

"I thought I heard someone talking", he said.

"It was I, father — I was rehearsing my scene in the new play the Elsinore Players are putting on."

"Well — go to bed", and he turned away.

VI

"I understand it all, now", said Hamlet.

"I'm glad", said Ophelia.

They were sitting in her father's parlor, with the gas turned down low. He was holding both her hands. Her father had gone to bed.

"I knew from what I heard", she went on, "that you had a mother complex. So I looked it up in Freud. I was just marking the passages I wanted to show you when you shinned up the porch that night. . . ."

"I was just going to say goodby to you and go home and kill my uncle", he said. "It seems funny, now. I certainly was in a terrible state. . . . Let's get married tomorrow, Phelia."

"No — not for two weeks. Not till

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after the play. I want you to see me act. I've got a splendid part. It's a girl who goes crazy with love, and drowns herself. Well — I'm glad girls have more sense than that nowadays! . . . You must bring back that book — I have to return it to the public library."

H. 2d laughed ruefully. "My mother burned it up", he said. "She saw it in my room, and put it in the furnace, and gave me a lecture on my tastes in reading. She thought it was obscene. I've ordered another from a bookstore in Chicago."

There was a noise, followed by a groan. They rushed to the door. Old Mr. Polonius, who had forgotten to lock the back door, had started down the back stair, and tripped, and fallen headlong. Luckily he was not badly hurt.

STORY OF A LIFE

By Marion Strobel

HE had a foolish face —
Round as a comic sun
With features pasted on
For fun;

With features that were small
And pink and had no place
Upon a vast expanse
Of face;

And always he would smile
And every word he used
The folly of his smile
Excused.

Was he, perhaps, smiling? . . .
. . . He "flung the window wide,
Crashed down through a skylight" —
And died.

— Smiling at all the years
Over which hope had bled
Dying, and now at last
Was dead?

Smiling that now at last
There was no mirror where
He'd see his face and part
His hair.

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MR. POVERTY-STRUCK, BOOK COLLECTOR

By Hugh Walpole

I HAVE a friend. He lives in the Temple in two little rooms at the top of many flights of rickety stairs and thus far might be a hero in one of Mr. Thackeray's novels. He is unlike in any other respect, having been eaten up ever since the armistice with all the post-armistice diseases of unrest, discontent, cynicism, and morbidity. Before the war he was a barrister with very little practice and sufficient means to keep him contented. Now he has rather less practice and the same means. I went a year ago to have supper with him and found him very peevish and unhappy. Was he ill? Oh no, he was in splendid health. Was his work failing him altogether? Not at all. He had rather more of it than before. Did he want to be married? Far from it. Every time he looked at his married friends, he thanked God that he was single.

After careful inquiry, it turned out that what he wanted was a hobby, something to amuse him and take his thoughts away from his own wretched self. He liked golf, but golf now was so expensive. He would like to collect pictures, but it was impossible to get anything that he wanted with his miserable purse. I then suggested book collecting. He looked at me in amaze. "Book collecting?" Was I laughing at him? Of course he loved reading and book collecting would be real fun were one a millionaire. I suggested that it was possible for people who were not millionaires to get a great deal of fun out of it. He laughed again. Yes, it may have been possible once, so recently perhaps as those adorable 'eighties and 'nineties when people went about picking up Donnes and "Robinson Crusoes" and Elizabethan dramatists for nothing at all, but that was over. Everybody knew too much, the best things were all snapped up. To which I replied that the best things were never all snapped up, because there were so many best things and so many people who were selling their best things that they returned to the market again and again. But it was not, I assured him, best things in that kind that I was suggesting. It never entered my head that he should put in for a First Folio, because as soon as his friends saw it they would come round in crowds to borrow money from him. No, there was a much better way of being a book collector than going into a swell shop, seeing a fine Walton's "Angler" behind a glass bookcase, and writing a check for it.

He began to look a little interested and asked me to tell him what I meant. "I will give you my own history", I answered. "It was seven years ago. I was home on leave in the middle of the war and I went with a friend to one of the Red Cross book sales at Christie's. Of course I'd bought books before this, and had quite a respectable little reference and modern library, but I thought as you did—that book collecting in the true sense was impossible for a small

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purse. Christie's was crowded and I stood modestly in the background, never dreaming of trying to get anything. I had a notion that there was a mysterious thing called a Ring that sat round the auctioneer and snapped everything up. Suddenly there was handed round a first edition of Lewis's 'Monk', a book for which, since I was forbidden to read it in early youth, I had a romantic affection. The bidding began at what seemed to me an extraordinary, low price. Nobody seemed to want it. My friend suddenly said, 'Would you like that?' I gasped, said 'Yes', he nodded, and, before I knew, the book was mine at almost no money at all.

"I bought several other things that afternoon and suddenly, going mad at the last, plunged heavily after a Trollope manuscript. I got it at a price which made me gasp but which was nothing really enormous. Next day, when I recovered myself, I sat at my table with the 'Monk' and the Trollope, two novels by G. P. R. James, and a letter of Charles Lamb's spread out in front of me. I had neither hunger nor thirst that day. These things seemed to me exquisite, wonderful. My little library of modern books that surrounded me appeared cheap and tawdry. A book collector's lust had seized me."

"All very dramatic," said my friend, "but there aren't any Red Cross sales any more."

"Just you listen", I answered. "A man I knew came to see me the next day and I showed him my treasures. He showed that polite but languid interest that nine times out of ten is the book collector's pain and penalty. One of the first things that you learn is that except for a chosen few, you are collecting for yourself and yourself alone. Have no illusion that you are going to dazzle your guests with your acquired splendors. They are all bored and go away saying, 'I don't know how he can bother with those musty old things.' However, that's by the way. This particular friend, although he was bored, said languidly, 'What a good idea. Why not get first editions of all the interesting novels in the English language? They'd look damn funny standing up in rows', and then proceeded to talk about football.

"From that moment the pursuit began. Every spare minute was taken up with searching in old bookshops, and I was very soon amazed to discover how easily some of the things I wanted were obtained. You were held up, it is true, by the amazing prices asked for some things. Thackeray and Dickens you would expect to be expensive, at any rate in the original parts, but why should a first 'Romola' be so proud of itself, why 'Wuthering Heights' be almost unobtainable, why should Trollope's 'Doctor Thorne' have such a good conceit of himself, and 'The Last Chronicle of Barset' be had almost for the asking? Jane Austen you might expect in her original boards and labels to be out of the question, but what about the Stevenson prices, for instance? Why that fantastic price for 'Prince Otto', when 'Kidnappeds' are as common as the daisies of the field? All these discoveries only added to the fun of the game. You suddenly found yourself with certain beloved authors running out into unexpected extensions. The great Sir Walter, for instance, a hero to me almost from my birth, offered endless excitement with the large paper poems and the imitation 'Waverleys' by other hands, and the baby 'Tales of a Grandfather', and the sets of extra illustrations, and so

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on. As to Trollope, there is no end to the fun that you can get out of him, and except for the first two Irish novels and in a minor degree 'Doctor Thorne', he is never prohibitive. Then I discovered that our generation is just far enough away from the 'nineties to make that a most amusing period.

"All those precious little books of precious little short stories issued by John Lane, the works of Hubert Crackanthorpe and Ella D'Arcy, the early Streets, those queer bad novels by John Davidson, the beginnings of that mad and already forgotten genius M. P. Shiel (he is coming back with a vengeance one day), the delicious early Peakland stories of Murray Gilchrist, the first editions of the best Wellses, 'The Time Machine' and 'The Wheels of Chance' with its funny pictures—you've no idea how interesting and exotic and faded and pathetic these little books all appear, or you can go back if you like to the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth to the now completely forgotten contemporaries of Fielding and Richardson, Scott and Jane Austen, and you will find the most amusing things. You can start with the obvious Radcliffes and Godwins and Ferriers, then you will discover clinging on to these books like 'Sidney Biddulph' and 'The Children of the Abbey' and 'Nature and Art' and 'St. Johnstoun' and 'Julia' and hosts of others. These are to be picked up almost everywhere for nothing at all. Then you have the further excitement, if you like to go so far, of speculating about the moderns, of collecting perhaps half a dozen of the younger English novelists, following everything that they do, marking down, for instance, Miss Romer Wilson, Aldous Huxley, Brett Young, or Clemence Dane.... Have I roused you?"

He looked interested. "Yes, there's something in that," he said, "but suppose one doesn't care about novels? What else is there?"

"Oh there are hundreds of things", I said. "For instance, there's magazine collecting. Go around and hunt up all the interesting volumes of the English magazines of the last hundred years. That sounds terrific, but it isn't so really. Have the first 'Quarterlies', the first dozen issues of 'Blackwood's', 'Ainsworth's Magazine', and 'Cornhill'; the 'Bentley's' with 'Oliver Twist', 'The Scotch Observer', the first dozen numbers of the 'English Illustrated'; 'Henley's New Review' with Conrad and Wells, the first dozen of 'The English Review', 'The London Mercury'. There are, of course, countless extensions of this, but with the exception of 'The Scotch Observer', you can get all those that I have mentioned for very little indeed. It seems invariably true that the best life of a magazine is in its first years. There's no reason whatever to fill your shelves with endless volumes; pick out the best, and omit eight or eighty numbers of the series without a blush.

"Then there are color books. Of course the great color books, the Ackermanns and the rest, are prohibitive, but there are any number of jolly old books with black and white and color to be bought for almost nothing. Or there's crime. You can't go to any bookshop in England without finding volumes of trials. You will be confused and bewildered, but soon periods will assort themselves and you can get a better view, for instance, of the life of the eighteenth century through these old volumes of trials than in any other way that I know."

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My friend moved uneasily. "You're exciting me", he said. "I believe there's something in it."

I left him that evening conscious of having performed a kindly and a gracious act. But had I? I met, two days ago, someone who recently saw my friend, saw him walking hurriedly down the Strand, books under both arms, his face pale and haggard, his clothes threadbare. When spoken to, he started as though he had been shot, and dropped most of the books onto the pavement. He was like a man inebriated. "Don't stop me", he said. "There are two or three things in Dobell's new catalogue that I must make sure of. They'll be gone if I'm not quick", and he vanished.

I'm told by others who know him that his practice, such as it was, has gone entirely to pieces. Others again tell me that he is a man rapturously contented and happy. Have I done him good or harm? Is his present emaciated and threadbare condition better than the old rubicund and discontented one? I don't know. I can't say, but of one thing I'm sure — that it is far easier for a book collector than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

WHEN I AM PLUNGED IN SUNLIGHT

By Jane Barbara Alexander

WHEN I am plunged in sunlight
And spattered with drifting blossom,
And my heart is stitched with scarlet thread
Twisting into song,
I may belong to my body —
Funny and brown and lissom,
Or to any calico wayfarer
Who happens to swing along.

For I am a foolish person
Who would rather steal than borrow.
I'd lie with a priest in a fallow field
To keep from sipping sorrow!
But since my heels *will* blister —
For all my head is light,
I very often cry to you
In the mauve twilight.

And where you are I do not know,
Or even how you fare
But I weep to see the stars
Shining through your hair!

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THE LITERARY SPOTLIGHT

XXIII: WILLIAM ROSE BENET

With a Caricature by William Gropper

WHEN one flings one's soul to the air like a falcon flying it sometimes suggests more than venery. It also postulates a certain innate knack at juggling. Perhaps it would be going too far to assert that William Rose Benét is a juggler, for that intimates an obvious basis of deception. Mr. Benét may be "a devil an' a ostrich an' a orphan-child in one" besides an occasional impersonation of an "injia-rubber idiot on the spree" but he is never a base deceiver. He is as transparent as a pane of glass and though he may skip blithely over the great wall of China and burglarize the Zodiac he does it with the frank ingenuousness of a child. He is our most naïve poet, his naïveté being the direct product of a wholehearted abandonment to his métier. He always jumps into Helicon with his galoshes on. He splashes about in his overcoat, an umbrella gripped in one hand, and he comes out dripping. And then he shakes the drops from him until they dance in the sun sparkling with all the colors in the rainbow. He adores the most variegated hues and those literary connotations that bring to mind the barbaric braveries of the past. Starting with "Merchants from Cathay" one may skim through his poetry to "Moons of Grandeur" and happen upon all sorts of heroes and fabled beasts from Sir John Mandeville to Luke O'Connor and from unicorns to the aforementioned falcon. His rhythms in the past have been emphatic, sonorous, rolling. Rhyme and interrhyme clash and kiss. He is a tonal artist, a felicitous verbalist, a juggler in a city square (preferably New York) flinging up gold and crimson and emerald globes.

All this should be set down first as a prelude to the affirmation that William Rose Benét (known to his more or less familiars as "Bill") is an incurable romanticist vaguely attempting to set his sail in a perplexing wind storm of cerebration. Indeed, for a time his acquaintances feared that the mellifluous regurgitations of Old Alf Noyes were about to sweep Benét into a treacly ocean from which there would be no escape. But they didn't. Bill put the snaffle on his unicorn and cantered decorously away from the syncopated remarks that the wild waves were saying. He is a much better poet than he is generally given credit for, but he has several disastrous handicaps in putting this fact over. He is not inclined to stop where he should stop. He is apt to overlard his matter a bit with color. And he *will* read his own work. For instance, when he starts his falcon off on its well known "fling" one gathers from Bill's voice that it is taking the air much as an old fashioned aeroplane or a glider does. It must have a long run first. When Bill reads a poem it sounds like a Druid incantation.

There was no particular reason for William Rose Benét, in the first place. His family was a military family and

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it will take more than Dr. Freud to figure out why an entire generation should suddenly turn poet. But they did; and the result is that Scarsdale, the present home nest, might be likened to that famous pie wherein the four and twenty blackbirds caroled so sweetly. It is regrettable that Bill did not go into the regular army, even for a short while, because there is in existence a portrait of Our Hero in uniform that is joyous to behold. He looks like the Duke of Wellington the morning after Waterloo. Such pride and poise betokened anything but a poet. Instead of going into the regular army Bill went to Yale. Now the influence of Yale on poets—but then, this is a matter for the consideration of Harvard men. At Yale Bill wrote poetry voluminously and he has kept at it ever since. His subsequent career has been a series of mild jumps from position to position. Sometimes they weren't positions; they were just jobs. He worked on the staff of "The Century Magazine". He worked for an advertising firm. He worked for "The Nation's Business". He once published a little magazine of his own, "The Chimæra", which beat most little magazines by one month. It ran two months. He helped win the war. He doesn't talk about it. He is now associate editor of "The Literary Review".

Two of the gestes enumerated above deserve particular attention, for they throw light on Bill's personality. First there was the advertising agency. Its name shall be kept secret forevermore, but certain feats perpetrated by Bill while attached to that mercenary undertaking must be set down. It is quite possible that the majority of virile young men who read these lines will have had no occasion especially to note the advertisements of Mennen's Talcum Powder. But for those people who have, a gentle prodding of the mind may recall to them a catch line reading, "The petal texture of baby's skin." *That* was created by William Rose Benét. *That* is one of his most famous lines. And then there was that charming assertion which accompanied the advertisements of Murphy's Varnish, "Your house under glass." For six months Bill labored with this advertising agency, striving mightily to inoculate its callous ad men with a more æsthetic feeling for their calling. Alas, it was no go. He cast his eyes elsewhere. Strangely enough they landed pop upon "The Nation's Business". Now "The Nation's Business" is conducted by the Chamber of Commerce of Washington, D. C., and its purpose is—well, the nation's business. It is possible that the editor mistook Bill for a merchant, and so he is; but not the kind of merchant that "The Nation's Business" would be especially interested in. Bill is a merchant from Cathay. He swaps unicorns and sells patches from the sunset to anybody that requires them. This being so (and the place being the United States of America), Bill went to work on "The Nation's Business" and wrote lengthily about the coal situation. It was from that dark and forbidding labor that Christopher Morley (looking for kinsprits, possibly) rescued Our Hero, brushed the coal dust out of his hair, took his mind off the nation's business, and incontinently ran him back into the literary game. To show how callous he was Bill immediately wrote a novel. People thereupon decided that he was a very good poet, indeed.

At this point (resting on one's oars while doping out the Reasons Mainly Spiritual why William Rose Benét should be permitted to Remain in

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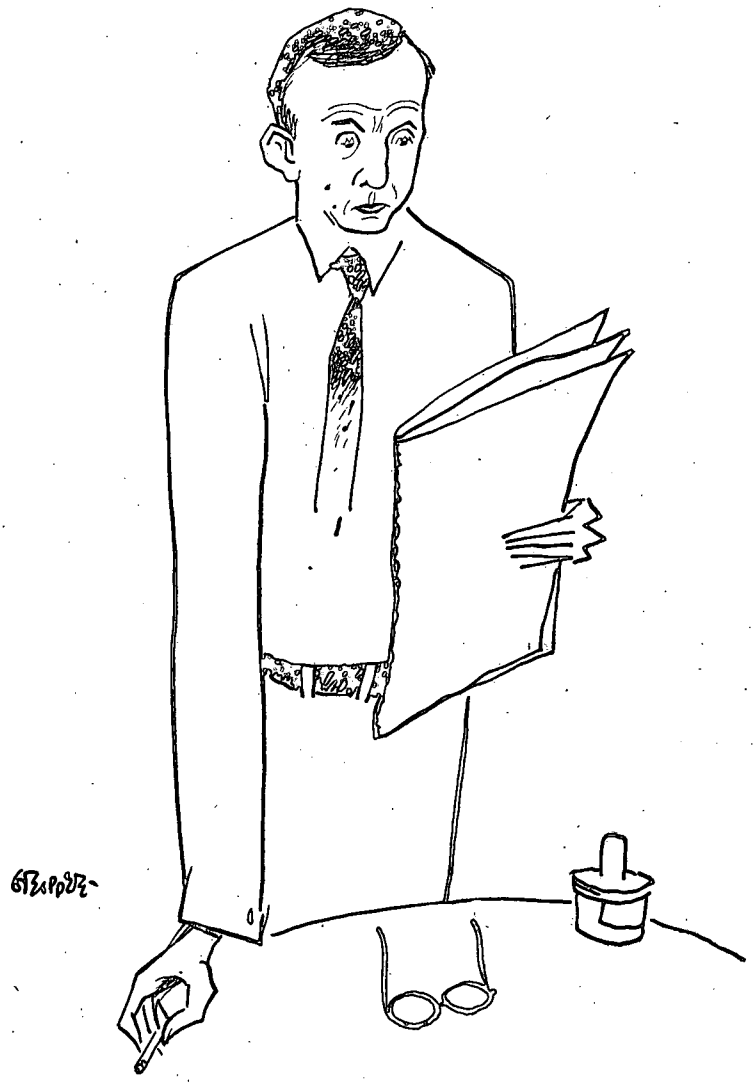

William Rose Benét

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America) it may be apropos to inject a few personalia. Bill is long and lean and lissom with spidery legs. He speaks slowly and smiles readily at bad and pointless jokes. This is courtesy, however, not stupidity. He never loses his temper except when a stranger puts his hat on. He likes spaghetti. He is anti-Prohibition. He is assiduous in doing things for people. His neckwear (nothing to speak of in the old days) has taken on a Renaissance flavor and hue of late. He is brown and smooth faced and guileless. One has to look twice before discovering his eyebrows. His eyes are small. His nose looks as though it had been gently pushed by somebody and had not sprung back into shape. He takes his coat off when he works. He resembles Vachel Lindsay in that he loves to draw, and his artistic creations are sometimes marvelous to behold. He will draw a picture for anybody who asks him. He is good company because, unlike most modern poets, he is always ready to listen. He has his faults, too. He is aggravatingly patient. He is altogether too equanimous. In a brown suit he looks like a Venezuelan blood, a rakish South American who still goes to Sunday School.

And now for the Reasons Mainly Spiritual. Bill is one of the few American writers who have passed the dangerous age of thirty-five and still continue to respect the substance more than the form. He can find virtue in both Stuart P. Sherman and Ezra Pound. The excellencies of "Ulysses" are as apparent to him as the excellencies of "Pride and Prejudice". He does not necessarily detest Maxwell Bodenheim because he likes Matthew Arnold. His own poetry must be regarded as essentially conservative and yet he carries no brief for it as against the manifestations of the younger experimentalists. He loves poetry and that is all there is to it. Wherever it may be and in whatever guise, he will willingly recognize it if it be there. Naturally such an attitude is both admirable and annoying. He will never be a militant figure, never fight furiously for a movement, never go into the thick of the wordy battles and take blows as well as give them. In other words, Bill is not fashioned from fighting timber. He was wise in not joining the regular army. He is, at his best, an intelligent appreciator and he does not bow under the heavy misapprehension that the future of American letters rests upon his shoulders. We may guess that he likes to be comfortable, that he desires to be neither a Solomon nor an Ishmael.

The prophets have their place and so, too, do the valiant fighters for doubtful causes. As these more hardy ones, in a certain way, do represent the future so does Benét represent the present, the wise, tolerant, unaffected not-too-radical day of established values. He possesses the open mind that will welcome and admit nascent achievements and really make much of them when he is satisfied that they contain the authentic ingredients of poetry. He is an intelligence and he is much further from the old, mossback traditionalists than he is from the younger men. It is true that his own poetry is conservative and that he appears to be well satisfied with the place where it is broadly established today. But it is to be suspected that in his reading he is quite willing to go further than he does in his actual composition. His methods of self-expression have matured; as a writer he will go no further; he is content with that. He has shaken the thin ghost of Noyes from his work alto-

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gether and has definitely established himself as a born balladist. He is not a great poet and he will never be a great poet. Certain things are lacking, profundity of thought, for instance, and the high peak of inspiration. But he grows with his work; he combs it better. The difference in values between "Merchants from Cathay" and "Moons of Grandeur", for instance, should be perceptible to all. A reckless flamboyancy has been shaken off and in its place is a rich, colorful melodic strain that is arresting with distinguished imageries and an extraordinarily fine technical precision. He is an intelligent, albeit rather easy, critic of letters and his prose is invigorated by a certain deftness and whimsical lightness. "The First Person Singular", his solitary novel, might have been much better if he had taken it more seriously and wrought it more carefully. He needs time and leisure, perhaps, to do his best work.

He is essentially the child of erudition, and all that is bizarre and colorful and marvelous and strange in letters makes an extremely forceful appeal to him. Because of this it is frequently true that the smell of the study lamp may be sensed in his poetry. It is often there quite frankly, and the deliberateness with which it is set forth should silence most fault-finders. True enough, this leaning toward books for inspiration is a danger, for it is likely to squeeze a deal of life out of the composition. But there is another side to it. One must admit that there is an equal chance of breathing life into these figures and situations which, for the most part, are as motionless and faded as figures of an old tapestry.

This Benét does when he is at his best. Then, too, he turns with frequency to life itself, to his own reactions toward that restless tiger, and when these moods result in such things as "Fire and Glass", for instance, there is no reason to be worried about the poet's future. He is here to stay and for some time. If he had a tougher backbone —

SALT OF SORROW

By Jeannette Marks

I KNOW a breast dearer to me than yours,
Deeper it is and full of the salt of sorrow;
There is no vanity and no jest,
Only the strong beating of many waves,
And there is rest.

On that heart are no pledges made and none broken;
Only the tide washing the sand, shifting and gold;
Only the weeds and the shells and eternity, —
I know a breast for my head deeper than yours,
I know the sea!

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A BOOKSHOP NIGHT'S ADVENTURE

Concerning a Beautiful Lady; the Poetry of Edwin Arlington Robinson and Robert Frost; and a Certain Kiss Belonging to Mr. Max Beerbohm.

By Samuel Roth

With a Sketch by Herb Roth

AN elegant carriage had paused before my window (lighted against the semidarkness of a December twilight) and my interest in the incident was nearly exhausted, when I started slightly, to discover that its charming occupant whom I had watched emerge was in my shop and not in the grocery store, my neighbor, which all the fashionable folk in the neighborhood frequent.

My visitor was wrapped in a large ermine coat so white as to offset the clear splendor of her face. I remember of my first impression of her, only that her coat was so huge it overshadowed her completely, and it was strange to hear a very sweet, gently tranquil voice ask for "The Works" of Max Beerbohm.

Now only the most human and unliterary people care at all about Beerbohm; only the most delightful people ask for "The Works" which is the tiniest and most whimsical of his published books.

"I fear not", I began to reply.

"Oh, I see. You keep only poetry."

"Only poetry", I repeated. "Poor poetry!"

She threw back an enormous collar and I saw her face clearly and fully. I want you to understand that it was a beautiful face: beautiful faces are essential to my conversation. But I will say nothing else about her. You need only understand that she was beautiful. Do you know why mediæval sculptors closed the eyes of the statues of the goddesses? How would anyone be able to pass them by or, once having noticed them, go on with the work of the world? It would fill the world with uneasiness, mused these sculptors, should the eyes of the goddesses look upon us. I will therefore say nothing more about the lady's face; for at the end of this chapter the face vanishes and with it a hand and a sound you might regret as much as I do.

She smiled and asked: "Why do you sigh for poetry?"

"Because, madam, you would rule out of its domain some very fine poetry in the writings of Max."

"But he has not written any poetry I can remember."

"If you mean verse," I conditioned, "you are most likely right. I cannot remember ever having seen his name attached to a verse form. I should not be at all surprised if he has never placed his name under a metrical composition. But I assure you he is concerned with a much profounder music than goes into the making of couplets and triolets."

"I fear I shall have to take off my coat", she said.

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"I must warn you, madam, that the atmosphere is a trifle cool. My little oil stove here gives but scant heat and if I do not visibly shiver with the chill of my blood it is because my bones from long exposure have become inured."

"Nevertheless," she insisted, "I will take off my coat. May I just throw it over the counter?"

I put out a restraining hand. "By doing that, madam, you would obscure the faces of at least thirty poets who gaze at you with troubled eyes from the white wrappers of their books. They are young and modest and not a little ashamed of themselves. But even the meanest of them, madam, has a consciousness of some greatness, and they all feel that what they can reveal to you today is but as chaff compared with what they will be able to reveal to you in their next books. But they are, nevertheless, instinct with nobility and they would not be entirely obscured from you." And I threw her coat over the back of the great chair near my diminutive oil stove, where she sank down comfortably.

"Tell me of these poets whose shopkeeper you have made yourself", she sighed.

I hesitated a while, then said to her: "You must realize, madam, that I can hardly give you an unbiased account. Where you sit now is the battlefield of the poetry of a nation, and in this field I cannot be a judge, because I am one of the most onesided and one of the most partial of the combatants.

"Even as you asked me that question, the ghosts of a hundred noble heads lifted themselves in the air with anguished eyes pleading that I remain silent. They do not much mind what I say about them to most people, but they are a little sensitive, madam, when a beautiful lady is concerned. Then they become frantic. Their agony is so pitiable, my heart will not let me offend them."

"They are sensitive—I already know one thing."

"Sensitive and quarrelsome, madam, but they have hardihood and beauty in abundance — all of them."

"Then you will not tell me. But surely there must be one or two who are beyond all this. I mean —"

"Above the battle, madam?"

"I don't like Romain Rolland and I don't like his phrase, but I fear that is exactly what I mean. If your poetry is worth anything at all, there must be one or two such big men whom all the rest love and revere."

"There are two such men. I dare say you may have heard of them. I mean, of course, Edwin Arlington Robinson and Robert Frost."

"I'm afraid not."

"Really!"

She saw that an explanation was forthcoming and she granted it graciously. "I come from England," she said, "where we know nothing whatever about poetry."

I shook my head. "I must reprove a modesty which has so little root in truth, madam. England is the soil and climate of poetry. She is the new Hellas of Europe, and, being placed farther north, she is not likely to be corrupted so easily. But I fear it is true that you know very little about American poetry in England. Which is sad both for America and for England. Saddest, I fear, for America, whose young always look to England for an understanding of their profounder labors. . . . I dare say England loses not a little by not understanding our poetry."

She smiled. "If it is true that there is profit for England in understanding

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American poetry, rest assured that England will not wait much longer."

"I fear you don't believe me, madam", I remonstrated. "But in the case of Edwin Arlington Robinson, at least, I see clearly that England has considerable to gain from American poetry. Mr. Robinson is, I dare say, one of the most important writers of English living."

"You forget, don't you," she said gently, "that contemporary England holds Thomas Hardy?"

"I do not forget Hardy, madam, and I have read him with some degree of care and pleasure. Nevertheless I tell you that Robinson is one of the clearest lights in the English world of today. Let me read you something out of his works."

She sat back in her chair and, armed with his books, I planted myself opposite her.

I read to her first out of "Children of the Night" those memorable poems "Richard Cory", "John Evereldown", "Reuben Bright", and "James Wetherell"; out of "Captain Craig" I read her the first and the last stanzas of "Isaac and Archibald" and "The Field of Glory"; out of "The Town Down the River" I read her "Calverly's" and "Miniver Cheevy"; and out of "The Man Against the Sky" I read her "Flammonde", "Eros Turranos", and the title poem. I must have read fully an hour, and I dare say my visitor's interest did not wane for a moment, which was extraordinary considering the compactness of Robinson's verses and the unrelieved dulness of my reading voice.

She looked very thoughtful for a few minutes after I had ceased to read to her. Then she said: "He's not very soft, is he?"

I was perplexed. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, he is not musical. The notes hit hard against your ear and, were not the mind on the watchout to catch them and transform them into a profounder mental rhythm, they would be altogether lost. But that is not his sole fault. His larger pieces lack the epical quality, I mean the forward-march stuff with which, if one is prepared, one may go through many cantos of 'Paradise Lost'."

I considered. "What you say is very true. But I tell you it is no longer possible for a man to write that way and remain true to the world he is living in."

"You think the spirit of poetry has changed?"

"No, madam, but the spirit of the world has changed. People are less inclined to sing and a little more inclined to think. Well, perhaps, I should not say *think*. They have fallen into a sort of torpor, and lyricism, to escape being altogether absurd, must be a little more contemplative. Do you know why you have found no successor to Alfred Tennyson? Tennyson sang his songs full throated and melodiously out of the heart of an England which sang with him in chorus. Alfred Noyes, for trying to sing in the same manner without the help of England, found it necessary to hide his humiliation in the shadows of an American university.

"You see, madam, we are living on the threshold of a new Dark Ages, with the promise of eternal love behind us and only a vision of impending doom before us. The gods which were stone have become human, and the gods which were human have been turned to stone. We want, not the love we never believed in, but the wisdom we have always run away from. Only a fool may sing lightly today.

"And if the light singsong lyric is

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"My visitor was wrapped in a large ermine coat"

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out of temper with our times, the epic-Miltonic tone of which you complain there is nothing in Robinson, is equally, and deservedly, unpopular. It has lost credit with an age now barely recovering from a series of profitless adventures in the dark jungles into which that kind of writing has led the race of man. Did a Milton arise today and write 'Paradise Lost' no one would listen to him.

"Robinson is eminently a wise man, therefore the true poet of our time. In 'The Man Against the Sky' he speaks out of the heart of modern man who, having sought the foot of the rainbow, has discovered it by finding out that really there is no rainbow at all. 'The Man Against the Sky' is a study of the heart of man in the new world. The most characteristic thing about him is the terrible sureness of his fate. Wherever it is he may be going, the end is inevitable. There is to be no more hesitation. There are to be no more tavern stops. The final consummation is about to take place. Man has experimented much. He has invented for himself a multitude of arts and pleasures. But his fate, a long time in pursuit of him, is now hot on his heels and about to overtake him at the edge of the abyss.

"Edwin Arlington Robinson alone among the writers of English today has an understanding of the consciousness of modern man, with an instinctive foreboding of his impending peril. And while he makes no mention of this, his very attitude, the kindliness of his bearing, forebodes evil. Knowing our doom, he loves us. Of the vain illusions of his contemporaries who plan to rebuild worlds of hope long sunk in the quicksands of oblivion, he says nothing, and when he does mention them his irony is not too strong. But all the time he knows whither we are going. That, madam, is Edwin Arlington Robinson, and when you return to England, you may tell your countrymen about him."

She was contemplative. "I assure you," she said, "I am going to look very carefully through his work. Already he interests me immensely. Do you know him? Do you ever see him?"

"I'm afraid I know him only casually, madam. Mr. Robinson honors this shop about once every two weeks with a half hour's visit in which he usually occupies the very corner and chair you have taken. He's a rather tall man, with an almost imperceptible stoop, and a very clear sensitive Yankee face. I mention the Yankee only because it is a somewhat shrewd face, and when I met him for the first time he insisted painfully that he was altogether a Yankee. Sometimes he looks like one of those old towers you see in the pictures of the Danube. The more I think of it, the less Yankee there is in him.

"Of his life I know very little, but not much less than is known by his most intimate friends. Some time ago, on the approach of his fiftieth birthday, some friends of Robinson suggested that it was time there was a book on him, and I was selected to do the writing. It became necessary for me to learn something about Robinson, but though I made the most arduous inquiries I could learn nothing about him. People who have known Robinson all their lives, know so little about the man they are somewhat startled to be asked—they look about blankly and shake their heads. So my proposed book dwindled down to an essay in THE BOOKMAN of January, 1920.

"And if his friends know nothing about his life, his books may be said to know just as little. Here is an ex-

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traordinary man for you. He does not confide even in his books. He began by writing as well as he writes now. His first published book, 'Children of the Night', contains as many notable poems as the last. Like the goddess Minerva, he seems to have sprung out of the head of his time armed with the subtlest and most cutting implements of the intellect.

"Always his mind has probed into the heart of the world about him. Never has he written to console a personal hurt or a vanity. His poetic development, if there has been any in the strict sense of the word, has been toward a complete nullification of the personal element to the complete triumph of the man of wisdom.

"You see, madam, I am almost blind in the bounty of my praise, but for the privilege of despising Miss Amy Lowell I must pay with the duty of admiring Edwin Arlington Robinson."

The lady brightened. "Now what about the other man you mentioned together with him — I think his name is Frost?"

"Robert Frost, madam, will be to you, as he has been to me, an assurance that Robinson is not some curious and isolated phenomenon, but the personification of a very weighty spirit abroad in our land today.

"You see, madam, you don't really understand America. No European can. You read our books (when you've a fancy to!), compare them with your own, and form a dismal conclusion. Remember this , madam: what you do not find in our books is not always what we have failed to learn. We have done a good deal of rejecting. Think of us as a people who began the building of a national culture at a time when culture had a better reputation than life, and discovered in the midst of our enterprise that culture had gone bankrupt and sold out entirely to life. Rigidity has been our position for a quarter of a century. We are the rock against which the seas of all ages and climates have beaten and been beaten back. We have rejected all the old sentiments, and our only assurance that our position is justified, is that we stand great and cold amid the boiling torrents of European culture.

"Robert Frost's poetry is at best a remarkable personification of this blackness and bareness and solidness. Let me read you some of it." I read to her out of "A Boy's Will", "North of Boston", and "Mountain Interval".

She was rather pleased and said: "You Americans are not half so wild as I expected you might become. I say *become* because I realize now that we know nothing of what you are."

I smiled. "I have shown you only Robinson and Frost. You don't know how wild American poets can be. Oh, you should see them. But I will not show you the worst, for this is not a circus — I will show you something of wild America in a poet who is not so accomplished as either of the two poets out of whom I read to you, but whom we love no less. I mean Carl Sandburg."

I brought forth "Chicago Poems" and "Cornhuskers". I read out of these books, to her increasing delight. "Now there is your real American!" she exclaimed with pleasure.

"That is the English in you, madam, rising in you to claim you as its own, as the sea gull rises to the high rocks periodically to perch on her nest. But I do not altogether blame you for liking Sandburg. We all love him for the freedom and the beauty of his imagination, but we pray fervently that he may some day be able to capture this beauty and cage it for us.

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"It is difficult to object very strenuously to the free verse of Carl Sandburg who is the personification of a very beautiful phase of the American spirit. I should say we oppose free verse in spite of the fact that Carl Sandburg writes it; and when we attack such utter drivel as the products of the 'Others' people, we try not to remember that Carl Sandburg is a writer of free verse.

"Free verse can be written very beautifully. Carl Sandburg does it in America. Richard Aldington does it in your own country. But the best of it has this grave fault: it is not memorable, it has no tentacles with which it can cling to the memory; so that while it produces a very pleasurable sensation in the reading, it has not the value of the poem in metre which remains with us for a very long time. Free verse serves the moment for the moment. Man, unfortunately, lives not only in the present but in the past and in the future as well. And now see, I have violated my silent agreement with these poets not to talk evil about them."

"But you have violated the contract only in spirit, for remember you have mentioned no names except the name of Carl Sandburg whom you profess to love."

I shook my head. "You misunderstand the poor fellows. Do not imagine their freedom a pretense. Alas, it is more serious with them than the art of poetry is with many an American poet who might make something of it, if he applied as much seriousness to it as vers librists apply to their nonsense. They mind much less what I say about them personally than what I say about their art. Yes, madam; they refer to it as their art."

"Nevertheless," she said, "I want you to add some of their works to my bundle."

I did and then escorted her back to her carriage.

"We forgot all about Beerbohm," I reminded her.

She smiled to me, holding the door open slightly. "You mean you forgot", she said. "But I didn't forget, I assure you. You see Max kissed me once."

The door was suddenly shut tight and the carriage rolled off.

NEEDLES

By Kathryn White Ryan

NEEDLE sharp, needle sharp, pierce the spires!
And beneath, steam drills shriek the quick beat of the city
Like the stroke of the oars in a slave ship.
The pens of poets lance at visions
Pins prick together lawyers' papers
Steel hypodermics bore in flesh
The sewing women stitch soft garments
Pale girls at tables stab in hats.
Tap tap, tap tap . . . in unison, in quivering,
The fangs of needles dart and sting.

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WHAT'S WHAT AMONG THE SEASON'S BOOKS

EACH season it becomes more difficult to approach publishers' catalogues with eagerness, and yet, strangely enough, one grows to find in them more surely and even more eagerly the books one really wants to read or, at least, to look over. Many of these books prove to be volumes written by friends, or enemies, or just favorite authors. Many of them live simply because of a cleverly written announcement. Others have the lure of romance in their titles, or the promise of information to discontented ignorance. Here on the desk before me is a host of white cards on each of which I have writ me the name of a book. Let's look them over. Then we can all hie us to a bookshop, purchase the volumes, and prove by the acid test of actual reading whether they should go to the second hand shop, the Y. M. C. A. library, or remain on our shelves.

Fiction will be our greatest problem. There is more of it. The first of these novels I have read. "A Lost Lady" (Knopf) by Willa Cather is more novelette than novel; but it is almost perfect of its kind. "The Hawkeye" (Bobbs-Merrill) by Herbert Quick is a splendid story with good characterization — almost as good as his "Vandemark's Folly". "Lummox" (Harper) by Fannie Hurst shows her writing in a curious new style, yet drawing a servant girl character that is tragic, real, impressive.

Suppose you were to choose the novels you were confident would be ably written, interesting, worth your while. Wouldn't they list somewhat as follows?

A Son at the Front. Edith Wharton. SCRIBNER.
The Rover. Joseph Conrad. DOUBLEDAY, PAGE.
Croatan. Mary Johnston. LITTLE, BROWN.
Janet March. Floyd Dell. KNOPF.
Deirdre. James Stephens. MACMILLAN.
Riceyman Steps. Arnold Bennett. DORAN.
Young Felix. Frank Swinnerton. DORAN.
Jeremy and Hamlet. Hugh Walpole. DORAN.
Annette and Sylvie. Romain Rolland. HOLT.
The End of the House of Alard. Sheila Kaye-Smith. DUTTON.

These you would choose probably without further investigation, except to learn that Arnold Bennett considers "Riceyman Steps" his best work since "The Old Wives' Tale", that "Annette and Sylvie" is the first volume of a series, "L'Ame Enchantée", which will analyze the soul of woman as "Jean Christophe" did that of man. Here, let's throw in two books which are quite likely to be unpleasant but which, doubtless, should be read by all those who pretend to follow contemporary fiction, "The Nuptial Flight" (Boni, Liveright) by Edgar Lee Masters and "Kangaroo" (Seltzer) by D. H. Lawrence.

The next list, I confess at the start, is peculiar to me. I pick these books because I must read them, want to read them, for one reason or another. "Oliver October" (Dodd, Mead), for example, is by the author of one of my early favorites, "Graustark", and then, too, George Barr McCutcheon is an excellent gentleman. I shall want to tell him some day that I did or did not enjoy "Oliver". Alexander Black's novels and essays are always filled with tolerant wisdom and genuine wit. His "Jo Ellen" (Harper) is a portrait of a girl. So, too, is Floyd

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Dell's "Janet March" (Knopf), a book of which those who have read advance copies speak glowingly. Elinor Wylie's poetry is among the best of our current product. Her novel, "Jennifer Lorn" (Doran), will command the attention of the discriminating. Anything Heywood Broun writes I read, from his column in the "World" to his accounts of prize fights. In "The Sun Field" (Putnam) he has used the baseball diamond as a background for his story. I hope that he has not lost the wistful quality which gave "The Boy Grew Older" its charm. Ludwig Lewisohn's "Up Stream", so much of which reads like exquisite fiction, would naturally lead me to his first novel "Don Juan" (Boni, Liveright), even if I didn't see him constantly at "second nights". T. S. Stribling's first novel, "Birthright", was sensational; but it was also really dramatic in part; so we may expect a thrill or two in his Venezuelan romance, "Fombombo" (Century). "John-No-Brawn" (Doubleday, Page) interests me for several reasons. First, because "Stubble" seemed to me to be a good first novel; second, because George Looms has long been a friend by correspondence; third, because he has chosen to handle in this new book the rather delicate problems of a disabled returned soldier and his readjustment to life. "Bread" (Dutton), by Charles G. Norris, I have read to see if I liked it better than "Brass" and as well as "Salt". Here Mr. Norris considers the question of the business girl in America, one which should be of increasing interest to all of us. "Silk" (Houghton Mifflin) by Samuel Merwin is a historical romance of old China. I remember Mr. Merwin's telling me the idea when he was at work on it, and the sound it had of color and adventure. "Jean Huguenot" by Stephen Vincent Benét is naturally one of the first books I turned to, partly because it is written by one of my closest friends, partly because my mother says that it, in her opinion, ranks with Swinnerton's "Nocturne". Three more books by friends, but good novelists too, are:

Streets of Night. John Dos Passos. DORAN.
The Seven Hills. Meade Minnigerode. PUTNAM.
The Red-Blood. Harold H. Armstrong. HARPER.

"Labyrinth" (Macmillan) by Helen R. Hull, if it is as interesting as her "Quest" and shows a little more humor, should be good reading. "Feet of Clay" (Little, Brown) by Margaretta Tuttle I began because Barton Currie says it is one of the best serials he's ever had for "The Ladies' Home Journal". "Sir John Dering" (Little, Brown) must be read if you admire the rollicking heroes of Jeffery Farnol as much as do I. "Pandora Lifts the Lid" by Christopher Morley and Don Marquis (Doran) arouses curiosity to see what two such notable gentlemen do under the strictures of collaboration. "Lew Tyler's Wives" (Putnam) is Wallace Irwin's new novel, and Mrs. Wallace Irwin, who is a fair minded and honest person, says that it's the best book he's ever written. Joseph C. Lincoln's yarns always amuse me, and I'm glad there's a new one. It is "Doctor Nye" (Appleton). Emerson Hough's story of Texas cattle rangers and their drive to Kansas, "North of 36" (Appleton), has been running in "The Saturday Evening Post". The instalments I happened to read were exciting enough to make me want the entire book.

The following seven books will be read by at least a million people. I shall allow myself to be snobbish and not read them this season, with the

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possible exception of Zane Grey's, just in case he may have told a story as good as "Riders of the Purple Sage".

Tetherstones. Ethel M. Dell. PUTNAM.
The Gaspards of Pine Croft. Ralph Connor. DORAN.
The Great Moment. Elinor Glyn. LIPPINCOTT.
The Call of the Canyon. Zane Grey. HARPER.
Butterfly. Kathleen Norris. DOUBLEDAY, PAGE.
The White Flag. Gene Stratton-Porter. DOUBLEDAY, PAGE.
The Mine with the Iron Door. Harold Bell Wright. APPLETON.

The mystery and adventure senses must be indulged. "Fortune's Fool" (Houghton Mifflin), Rafael Sabatini's contribution to this group, is set in the London of the Reformation. Octavus Roy Cohen, expert story teller, gives us "Jim Hanvey, Detective" (Dodd, Mead). William Johnston, turning from his confessions for stout folk, writes another mystery yarn, "The Waddington Cipher" (Doubleday, Page). Ben Hecht is said to have written "The Florentine Dagger" (Boni, Liveright) in eight, or was it ten hours? Both he and Arthur Machen should give an eerie quality to their lighter moods. Machen's mystery tale is called "The Three Impostors" (Knopf). Carolyn Wells has at least two stories on the autumn lists, also J. S. Fletcher, his newest being "The Markenmore Mystery" (Knopf). The ever prolific E. Phillips Oppenheim confines his efforts to one book, "Michael's Evil Deeds" (Little, Brown); but if we remember correctly, it is the third within the year.

Here are five novels by representative Americans, all of which I should want to read had I the time, particularly those by Arthur Train and Ellis Parker Butler which are bound to be amusing:

The Hope of Happiness. Meredith Nicholson. SCRIBNER.
Tut, Tut! Mr. Tutt. Arthur Train. SCRIBNER.
The Cinder Buggy. Garet Garrett. DUTTON.
Jibby Jones. Ellis Parker Butler. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.
J. Hardin and Son. Brand Whitlock. APPLETON.

Similarly with five from the British isles, that is, five if you can consider the Long Islandized Cosmo Hamilton as an Englishman, and the Bostonized Basil King in the same light:

Love's Pilgrim. J. D. Beresford. BOBBS-MERRILL.
One of the Guilty. W. L. George. HARPER.
The Happy Isles. Basil King. HARPER.
Anthony Dare. Archibald Marshall. DODD, MEAD.
Another Scandal. Cosmo Hamilton. LITTLE, BROWN.

What large numbers of fine ladies are writing stories, to be sure. Marie, Queen of Rumania, should perhaps head the list with "The Voice on the Mountain" (Knopf), then Rosita Forbes, with "Quest" (Holt) — a pity she should have picked a title so recently used in America. Dorothy Speare, who will return to Europe in the late autumn to make her début in opera, gives us "The Gay Year" (Doran). Zephine Humphrey deals with reconstruction in the Vermont Hills and calls it "Mountain Verities" (Dutton). Honoré Willsie, keeping to the wind blown spaces, picks a romantic title, "The Exile of the Lariat" (Stokes). There are books by the humorful Emma Speed Sampson, Juliet Wilbor Tompkins, Margaret Widdemer, Margaret Prescott Montague, Beatrice Kean Seymour, and many, many more.

Four more books I find on my list of novels; just why, I confess, I don't know. "The Sable Cloud" (Penn) by Harriet V. C. Ogden — I think it was the V. C. in the author's name. "Under the Law" by Edwina Stanton Babcock (Penn), because I have a faint

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memory of a story by the lady I read years ago. "Whatever Gods" (Duffield) by Maurice Samuel; because the description said it was a story of the conflict of young idealism with present day materialistic tendencies, which sounds like a praiseworthy undertaking. And "Nobody Knows" (Small, Maynard) by Douglas Goldring, because I once read an article by the young man which made me angry.

There seem to be a larger number of short story collections than usual this autumn — good ones, too. It is with some difficulty that one chooses among them. For my own taste, I turn first to a series of sketches by Dorothy Canfield, "Raw Material" (Harcourt, Brace). Next, perhaps more out of curiosity than any better reason, will come Sherwood Anderson's "Horses and Men" (Huebsch). Then there are "Uncanny Stories" by May Sinclair (Macmillan) and "Captures" by John Galsworthy (Scribner). Also, "Snake Doctor" by Irvin Cobb (Doran), "Big Brother" by Rex Beach (Harper), "The Shadowy Third" by Ellen Glasgow (Doubleday, Page), "The Doves' Nest" by Katherine Mansfield (Knopf), "The Other Story" by Henry Kitchell Webster (Bobbs-Merrill), and "Northern Neighbors: Stories of the Labrador People" by Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell (Houghton Mifflin). To finish this list, let me mention three collections that I shall not read: "Children of Loneliness" by Anzia Yezierska (Funk, Wagnalls), "Tappan's Burro" by Zane Grey (Harper), and "The Eighth Wonder" by A. S. M. Hutchinson (Little, Brown). Anzia Yezierska has become hopelessly sentimental; I am weary of Mr. Grey's brawny heroes; and A. S. M. Hutchinson is at his worst in the short form.

If you were to read only nine books this winter, and were looking for a combination of amusement and worth, I could think of no better plan than to load your shelves with some of the new autobiographies. What a variety of lives would be spread before you! Mrs. J. Borden Harriman (née Hurst) has given us memories of débutante days and of later life filled with social activity and vivid friendships. Her publishers have titled her volume "From Pinafores to Politics" (Holt). Contrast with this probably gay volume Carl E. Akeley's "Men and Animals" (Doubleday, Page). The eminent scientist, the elephant hunter, the friend of Roosevelt, here talks of jungle and of drawing room with equal ability. A veteran editor and a veteran publisher ramble through their lives for us. "Remembered Yesterdays" (Little, Brown) comes from Robert Underwood Johnson, and that thoroughly gallant and picturesque figure, Henry Holt, publishes his "Garrulities of an Octogenarian Editor" (Houghton Mifflin). Elisabeth Marbury brings the picturesqueness of the theatre to our list, and Kate Douglas Wiggin, the richness of a long life of happy understanding of men and books both here and abroad. They have called their books "My Crystal Ball" (Boni, Liveright) and "My Garden of Memory" (Houghton Mifflin). Science we shall represent by Marie Curie's "The Life Story of Pierre and Marie Curie" (Macmillan) and Michael Pupin's "From Immigrant to Inventor" (Scribner). A definite dash is added to the whole by the Marquis Boni de Castellane, who calls his probably racy volume, calmly enough, "My Memories" (Knopf).

Three other volumes there are which seem not quite to belong in the above list but which are worth attention. The memoir of an Englishwoman

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compiled by her daughter, "Lady Rose Weigall" (Appleton); Courtney Ryley Cooper's reminiscences of circus days, "Under the Big Top" (Little, Brown); and James Willard Schultz's "Friends of My Life as an Indian" (Houghton Mifflin).

Probably the most important biography is Lord Charnwood's "Theodore Roosevelt" (Atlantic), and next, Ida M. Tarbell's "In the Footsteps of the Lincolns" (Harper). That Mary Austin's "The Man Jesus" has been revised, enlarged, and is to be reissued as "A Small Town Man" (Harper) is certainly worthy of comment. Two new biographies of Henry Ford arrive. William L. Stidger, a divine of Detroit, has written "Henry Ford: The Man and His Motives" (Doran). And Allan L. Benson discusses "The New Henry Ford" (Funk, Wagnalls). One of the most gallant figures of the war was Raynal C. Bolling. Henry C. Pierson's "A Business Man in Uniform" (Duffield) should tell if he has done his job well. It gives not only the story of a brave and noble gentleman but a deal of illuminating information concerning the United States Air Service.

For music lovers there will be an interesting contrast in "My Musical Life" (Knopf) by Nikolas Rimsky-Korsakoff, the Russian composer, and "My Musical Life" (Scribner) by Walter Damrosch, many years conductor of the New York Symphony Orchestra.

Critical biographical studies are few; but there are three which promise excellence: Thomas Beer's "Stephen Crane: A Study in American Letters" (Knopf), which Joseph Conrad has introduced; "Leonid Andreyev" (Huebsch) by the California professor, Alexander Kaun; and "William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols" (Houghton Mifflin) by a young Harvard graduate, S. Foster Damon.

Frank Harris will publish volume four of his brilliant "Contemporary Portraits" (Brentano), we ourselves humbly offer "The Literary Spotlight" (Doran), and there will be "The Mirrors of France", anonymous, translated by Winifred Katzin (Knopf).

Perhaps it is age coming upon me, I don't know: but I am reading more and more essays. They are more satisfying for a quiet evening than the disturbing pages of a novel or the lyric ectasies of a poem. If I were to choose five volumes for my shelves, I should choose them for brilliance, for wisdom, for power, and as follows:

Masters and Men. Philip Guedalla. PUTNAM.
The Cheerful Giver. Samuel McChord Crothers. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.
The Editor and His People. William Allen White. MACMILLAN.
Fancies Versus Fads. G. K. Chesterton. DODD, MEAD.
The Color of a Great City. Theodore Dreiser. BONI, LIVERIGHT.

The six that follow are probably equally good. Robert Lynd's "Solomon in All His Glory" (Putnam) will be entertainingly brilliant. "Dramatis Personæ" (Bobbs-Merrill) by Arthur Symons will be graceful. John Masefield's retelling of the Trojan myth, "The Taking of Helen" (Macmillan), will be noble. "As I Like It" (Scribner) by William Lyon Phelps will be forthright. "Gods of Modern Grub Street" by A. St. John Adcock (Stokes) will be penetrating. "The Praise of Folly" by Bliss Perry will be wise, and "The Seven Lively Arts" (Harper) by Gilbert Seldes will be bumptious.

There are a certain number of literary studies, valuable ones, too. Drinkwater's "The Outline of Literature" (Putnam) is impressive, John Macy's "The Story of the World's Literature"

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(Boni, Liveright) will probably be simpler. May Lamberton Becker has made a collection of material from her New York "Evening Post" department and has called it "The Reader's Guide Book" (Holt). Harry Hansen, who knows his Chicago authors well indeed, has done studies of them in "Midwest Portraits" (Harcourt, Brace), while Percy Holmes Boynton, also of Chicago, enters a wider field with "American Authors of Today" (University of Chicago). D. H. Lawrence, who has attempted to analyze everything else in the universe, now turns his seeing eye to "Studies in Classic American Literature" (Seltzer). Louis Untermeyer has revised "The New Era in American Poetry" (Holt) and is calling it "American Poetry Since 1900". Stanley T. Williams, a young Yale professor, chooses to look backward. His book is "Studies in Victorian Literature" (Dutton). Herbert S. Gorman has collected a series of his critical studies under the title "The Procession of Masks" (Brimmer).

There seem to be few newcomers in the field of humor. Gelett Burgess resorts to supreme alliteration in his title, "Ain't Angie Awful!" (Dorrance). Robert C. Benchley waxes historic, as he approaches his début in "The Music Box Revue". He calls his volume "The Conquest of Cornwall" (Holt). Wallace Irwin modestly gives us "More Letters of a Japanese Schoolboy" (Putnam), and the intrepid Dr. Walter E. Traprock has written "Sarah of the Sahara" (Putnam).

Choosing five travel books, either for what I have heard of them or for the names of their authors, I find that I shall be wandering largely in exotic countries. That, however, in the midwinter will not be objectionable.

Galapagos — World's End. William Beebe. PUTNAM.
Travels in Arabia Deserta. Charles M. Doughty. BONI, LIVERIGHT.
Wanderings in China. Harry A. Franck. CENTURY.
Matahari. H. O. Morgenthaler. DORAN.
Jungles, Beasts and Men. Dhan Gopal Mukerji. DUTTON.

For American trips, we have Mary Roberts Rinehart's "The Out Trail" (Doran) and Webb Waldron's "We Explore the Great Lakes" (Century). The Princess G. V. Bibesco writes "The Eight Paradises — Travel Pictures in Persia, Asia Minor, and Constantinople" (Dutton), and Stephen Graham seeks Mexico and South America "In Quest of El Dorado" (Appleton). For salt sea spray we may go to Captain David W. Bone's "The Lookoutman" (Harcourt, Brace), "Blue Water", Arthur S. Hildebrand's account of a Mediterranean cruise (Harcourt, Brace), and Arthur Ransome's "'Racundra's' First Cruise" (Huebsch), in the Eastern Baltic, I think. Polar exploration finds "The Diary of Captain Scott" (Dodd, Mead) and "Shackleton's Last Voyage" (Stokes), written by Commander Frank Wild from the private diary of Dr. A. H. Macklin.

The two most important books of poetry this autumn from my standpoint are Robert Frost's "New Hampshire, A Poem with Notes and Grace Notes" (Holt), and "The Harp Weaver and Other Poems" by Edna St. Vincent Millay (Harper). I am much interested in "Here You Have Me" by Robert J. Roe (Doran) because I have always thought him, with the possible exception of Hervey Allen, the most promising of the younger poets. Conrad Aiken will have a new volume, "The Pilgrimage of Festus" (Knopf), Alice Brown has written a long narrative poem, "Ellen Prior" (Macmillan), Josephine Daskam Bacon will

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publish a series of dramatic monologues, "Truth O' Women" (Appleton). Only two volumes from England seem important, J. C. Squire's "American Poems and Others" (Doran) and "Whipperginny" by Robert Graves (Knopf). These volumes come from the so called radicals: "Tulips and Chimneys" (Seltzer) by the eccentric E. E. Cummings, "Birds, Beasts and Flowers" (Seltzer) by the active D. H. Lawrence, and "Less Lonely" (Harcourt, Brace) by Alfred Kreymborg who has recently taken to writing sonnets. There will be a new edition of Martha Foote Crow's "Christ in the Poetry of Today" (Womans Press) and one by Walter de la Mare, "Come Hither" (Knopf). Braithwaite's "Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1923" (Brimmer) will make its appearance.

Light and humorous verses promise well. "Parson's Pleasure" (Doran) by Christopher Morley is more serious than many of his volumes. "The Light Guitar" (Harper) by Arthur Guiterman is doubtless the same as usual, Clinton Scollard writes "The Epic of Golf" (Houghton Mifflin), and the always brilliant A. P. Herbert has taken to fantasy in "Tinker, Tailor, a Child's Guide to the Professions" (Doubleday, Page). As for the "Verses" (Putnam) by Ethel M. Dell, it remains to be seen whether Miss Dell will rank in that direction with Edgar A. Guest or Gene Stratton-Porter.

American playwrights are well represented this season. There will be a new volume of Eugene O'Neill containing "The Fountain" and "Welded" (Boni, Liveright), Zoe Akins's "Déclassée and Other Plays" (Boni, Liveright), and Rachel Crothers's "Mary the Third and Other Plays" (Brentano); "Three Comedies" (Macmillan) by the editor of "Life", Louis Evan Shipman, "Rain" (Boni, Liveright), the John Colton - Clemence Randolph dramatization of Somerset Maugham's "Miss Sadie Thompson", and the experimental "Roger Bloomer" (Seltzer) by John Howard Lawson. From England are five dramas of the first rank; or, at least, from first rank authors:

The Way Things Happen. Clemence Dane. MACMILLAN.
Robert E. Lee. John Drinkwater. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.
Don Juan de Maraña. Arnold Bennett. DORAN.
Arthur, A Tragedy. Laurence Binyon. SMALL, MAYNARD.
A King's Daughter. John Masefield. MACMILLAN.

Romain Rolland turned dramatist gives us "The Montespan" (Huebsch), and there are two Maeterlinck plays grouped under the title, "The Cloud That Lifted" (Century).

For the little theatres we have two Frank Shay edited books, "A Treasury of Plays for Men" (Little, Brown) and a selected list, "One Thousand and One Plays for the Little Theatre" (Stewart Kidd). A volume, too, of the able Bosworth Crocker's plays, "Humble Folk" (Stewart Kidd), with an introduction by Ludwig Lewisohn. Three general books on drama look valuable: "Our American Theatre" (Brentano) by that greatest of press agents and really wise student of drama, Oliver M. Sayler, "Masks and Demons" (Harcourt, Brace) by Kenneth Macgowan and Herman Rosse, and "The Community Playhouse in America" (Huebsch) by C. J. de Goveia.

Of general books there is a great store. Politics, international affairs, and what not — of these I picked eight titles:

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The Genesis of the War. Herbert Henry Asquith. DORAN.
The Decadence of Europe. Francesco Nitti. HOLT.
Duty to Civilization. Francis Neilson. HUEBSCH.
India in World Politics. Taraknath Das. HUEBSCH.
The Humanizing of Knowledge. James Harvey Robinson. DORAN.
Out of Work. G. D. H. Cole. KNOPF.
Psychology and Politics. W. H. R. Rivers. HARCOURT, BRACE.
Miscellaneous Addresses — Second Series. Elihu Root. HARVARD.

Turning rapidly to the kitchen, there are several new cook books, among them "The Borzoi Cook Book" (Knopf), but I choose to present to Bertha, that paragon of southern cooking virtue, "The Motorist's Luncheon Book" by May E. Southworth (Harper) and "A Book of Unusual Soups" (Little, Brown) by Mary D. Chambers.

Closely akin to cook books are all the "how to" books, among which, after all, etiquette books belong, don't they? Here's one which has a better title than many: "The Gracious Hostess and the Welcome Guest" (Bobbs-Merrill) by Della Thompson Lutes. Here are two "How to Sing", one a revised edition of Lilli Lehmann (Macmillan), another by Madame Tetrazzini (Doran). Here is "A Pocket Bridge Book" (Doubleday, Page) by Walter Camp, he of football and the Daily Dozen, and "How to Debate" (Lippincott) by Robert Weston Babcock and John H. Powell, Jr.

Art finds "Comments on Art" (Lippincott) by Robert Henri, noted by Margery Austen Ryerson, "Church Building" (Marshall Jones) by the veteran Ralph Adams Cram, "American Artists and Some Others" by Royal Cortissoz (Scribner), and "Old Houses of Connecticut" by Bertha Chadwick Trowbridge (Yale).

For music I find that my taste leans with hearty applause toward John Mann Walker's "Better Music in Our Churches" (Abingdon). Paul Rosenfeld's "Musical Chronicle" (Harcourt, Brace) should be unusual and brilliant, while "Folk Festivals and the Foreign Community" (Womans Press) by Dorothy Gladys Spicer presents interesting problems. Of religious books I have chosen five that engage my attention for one reason or another:

Twelve Merry Fishermen. Lynn Harold Hough. ABINGDON.
The Story of the Bible. Hendrik Willem Van Loon. BONI, LIVERIGHT.
His Religion and Hers. Charlotte Perkins Gilman. CENTURY.
Evolution and Religion. Henry Fairfield Osborn. SCRIBNER.
The Church in America. William Adams Brown. MACMILLAN.

My ten children's books are those which I shall wish to read myself:

The Starlight Wonder Book. Henry B. Beston. ATLANTIC.
St. Nicholas Book of Verse. Mary B. and Joseph O. Skinner. CENTURY.
Rootabaga Pigeons. Carl Sandburg. HARCOURT, BRACE.
This Singing World. Louis Untermeyer. HARCOURT, BRACE.
The Rose Fyleman Fairy Book. Rose Fyleman. DORAN.
New Roads to Childhood. Anne Carroll Moore. DORAN.
A Child's Story of American Literature. Arthur B. Maurice and Algernon Tassin. MACMILLAN.
Nicholas, A Manhattan Christmas Story. Anne Carroll Moore. PUTNAM.
Doctor Dolittle's Post Office. Hugh Lofting. STOKES.
Irving the New Boy. Archibald Marshall. STOKES.

To close, though I haven't read them I heartily recommend that, instead of reading so very much this winter, you get Edna Geister's "Fun Book" (Doran) and play games, then spend most of your spare hours (when you aren't playing games) with Carolyn Wells's "An Outline of Humor" (Putnam).

— *J. F.*

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THE LONDONER

"American Nights Entertainment"--English Publishers--This Year's Award of the Hawthornden Prize--Critics and "Creative" Writers--John Dos Passos in Europe--Dr. Joseph Collins's Book--Sabatini--"Babbitt" in the English Press--Women Writers and Their Propaganda--A. A. Milne's Favorite Book, and the Favorites of Others.

LONDON, *August* 1, 1923.

THIS is the dead season in the publishing trade, and most sensible people are away upon their holidays. They have thrown aside the pen and taken up the trowel or the spade or the bathing costume. And yet, deep in their hives, although their principals also are on holiday, publishers are preparing new books for the autumn season, and are hoping that they will be able to sell them, as if the bitter experiences of the past had no power at all to enlighten publishers as to the prospects of the book trade in times of almost universal trade depression. One sign of American publishing activity has just reached me, in a singular dummy copy of a book. It will be remembered how last year Messrs. Doran offered the public a survey of their own catalogue entitled "When Winter Comes to Main Street". I said then that I wondered some English houses did not adopt the same notion, and I heard that some of them were scheming to do so. Obviously Messrs. Doran could not repeat the performance, since the books of any one firm — however large — do not allow of a handsome volume being issued each year devoted entirely to the productions of a season. But ingenuity has been at work in the United States, and this new dummy which has just come to hand shows the result of it — the result, at any rate, in embryo. The book is called "American Nights Entertainment", and is composed as its predecessor was by Grant Overton. It celebrates the publications of four firms — Messrs. Appleton, Doran, Doubleday-Page, and Scribner — and is thus an epitome of much that is best in the American publishing world. It claims to start as a best seller, and I can well imagine it. It tells about so many new books and about so many of the writers of these books, and about so many of all sorts of entertaining things (as its title implies) concerned with the book world, that I can think of no home where books are bought and read as being complete without it. A look at the list of chapters is enough to make the mouth water, for there are to be separate essays upon Galsworthy, Conrad, Harold Bell Wright, Ralph Connor, Booth Tarkington; Zona Gale and V. Sackville-West, Edith Wharton and Gene Stratton-Porter; upon Christopher Morley, Lothrop Stoddard, Arthur Train, Joseph C. Lincoln, etc., etc. The fact that several firms have joined for the production of this book is significant of something more than mere profit making and the impulse to make profits; it is significant of the willingness of American publishing houses to join together in very friendly rivalry. It would never do for one of these houses to have an advantage over the others. And so here they all are,

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peaceably working in common, as English publishers always talk of doing and never quite manage to succeed in doing in fact. To me, it is a good sign of commercial fellowship. More, it is commercial wisdom, for all publishers are very much bound together by their trade, whether they will or no. The day when one book took all the orders is past. The lesson which so many economists refuse to draw from international trade has been learned at least by American publishers; and it is that Free Trade for all means wide markets for the best. However, some people have an ineradicable fear of the best, and so trade jealousies persist.

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In England there has for some time been an agitation for a great book campaign, similar to the one which I gather has been held and is being held in America. Apart from the fact that English people for some reason are less susceptible than American to the art of the slogan, there is the prime difficulty in this country that the hands of most publishers are in fact against each other. There has been an improvement in this matter during the last few years, and the Publishers' Association has been supplemented by the Publishers' Circle. Here the various publishers meet at lunch and talk of things which are supposed to bring publishers together for the common good — i.e., I imagine, against the hated authors and agents and booksellers; — but I do not know what profit comes of these lunches, which merely give loquacious persons, who after all are not always the persons possessing the greatest power anywhere, an opportunity of exercising their gift. When the question of a joint advertising campaign comes up, the barely concealed selfishness of all these publishers rises at once. They say, in effect, "Who will bell the cat?" or, in the true words, who is to pay most of the advertising costs? Those who have small lists want the matter to be calculated upon a basis of production — that those who publish most books shall pay the greatest sums. On the other hand, many of those who have very long lists claim that the books they publish have very small sales, that many of them are imported in sheets from America, and so on. Very well, say the enthusiasts, let us know what your turnover is, and your profit, and let us work out a scheme upon the basis of turnover and profit. But to this the disputants demur. They say that nothing in the world shall make them disclose either their turnover or their profits. And finally there are those excellent publishers who listen blandly to all the schemes, and consider that anything done to advance the prospects of the selling of books is to be much encouraged, but who decline with equal blandness to spend one cent upon the campaign which the enthusiasts require. And so the Publishers' Circle goes round, full of good will and good intentions, but lacking that constructive effort, that conviction, which makes the really galvanic movement. Possibly a great item in the consideration of the publishers who have long lists is that in England the libraries have a habit of buying most copies of really inferior books. In America, unless such books are bought by individuals, they are probably not circulated at all. But in English conditions it is possible for a publisher to subsist upon his library sales and no others. Just as it is possible for some unscrupulous publishers to subsist upon the sales of copies of their books to the authors who have written them, without any outside help whatever.

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This year, for the first time, it has been possible to receive a pleasant shock at the award of the Hawthornden Prize, and the committee has done itself honor in giving the prize to David Garnett for "Lady into Fox". Another name was freely mentioned in the few days immediately preceding the announcement of the award, and it was afterward learned that this other name had been deliberately spread by the wife of a member of the committee in order to preserve the novelty which had been lost upon other occasions. Whatever one may think of the kindness of this canard in face of its possible communication to the defeated candidate (whose name was not mentioned among those of conceivable recipients by any of the speakers), one must admit that the Hawthornden Prize has gone up in moral value as the result of the secrecy and unexpectedness of the award this year. Moreover, the choice of David Garnett absolves the committee from the appearance of choosing prizewinners from among those writers who were of their immediate circle. By this I do not mean, and do not wish to imply, that the prize has ever been given cynically or with conscious bias. What I mean is quite otherwise. Rightly or wrongly, it has come to be believed that some English critics have been forced through narrowness of sympathy into an attitude of almost hostility to work which does not conform to their own principles. They have been considered to be bigots. Never dishonest or insincere, but impervious to the merit of work in a different field from their own. This was a great pity, and the committee of the Hawthornden Prize had been by some regarded as biased in favor of — let us say — the Georgian Poets. To such critics the choice of David Garnett has been a sufficient answer, and the prize will in future have an enhanced distinction.

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This question of admiration for work which one approves is one of the greatest moment for those who present prizes. So, also, is literary fashion. As I go about the literary world, I hear the most extreme praise given to all sorts of writers I do not consider at all first rate. That seems to me unimportant, as I recognize the fallibility of my own judgment. It would not enter my head to follow taste or distaste to the extent of applauding in season and out of season writers — for instance in these London letters — whom I like to the exclusion of those whom I do not like, but my own position is easy. I am not asked to decide — except for domestic purposes. The task of selectors of writers who are to be given prizes, either of money or of critical praise, is much more difficult. Is the difficulty realized by outsiders? I think, not sufficiently. In some degree, these are the people who make our fashions for us. They praise in print, and upon their printed judgments many readers depend. The number of those who undergo the fatigue of judging for themselves, as Mr. Puff said, is very small indeed. What wonder that the critics begin to take themselves seriously and single out works for praise and blame with something like self-importance? Their work is onerous, and it is difficult. If more credit were attached to it in general, the standard would be higher. Moreover, the critics — however pontifical — are in general very sincere men. There is astonishingly little of the alleged puffery and spleen about which we hear so much. Only, there are limitations of sympathy. There is something wrong with the system

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whereby so many writers of what is called "creative" work are also the judges of others who are doing work in the same field but with slightly different aims. I so constantly hear complaints of bad faith, not only in the critics, but in the "creative" writers. There is not, in general, this bad faith or anything like it. Writers do not basely write for money to anything like the extent alleged. Critics are not bound by their friendships with other writers and their resentment of fancied insults from those they find it harder to praise. The trouble is, as I have said, limited sympathy, and, in many cases, mischief making on the part of those who go between writers and critics. There is too much personal gossip, too much repetition of adverse comment. For example, I heard the other day of a critic who ignored a particular book, was asked why, and replied, "It reminds me of a Pullman Car." That, it appeared, was a sufficient reason for omitting all mention of a most delicate and perceptive piece of work from the columns of a paper to which the critic contributed. It did not seem to me to be a fair reason. The author had done his work in good faith; the critic had thought of a rather obscure joke at the writer's expense. Very well, that is a question for the critic. The fault I am finding is with the person who transmitted the remark to the author, who asked me to translate its significance. The critic in the story was one of those who write to exhibit cleverness rather than considered judgment, but I think an injustice had been done. The critic, also a novelist, would have been aggrieved if the same thing had been done to herself. Are we not all human? Only, it appears, when we are ourselves attacked. Once, when I was listening to a lecture, the speaker mentioned that I had written an anonymous attack upon him, and that he had avenged himself by writing an attack upon me. I had not read his book, and had not attacked him. Does not that author's performance suggest a very rotten state of affairs? When one writer is supposed to attack another, and to receive attacks from him in return? Dogs are taught a trick which is called "Trust!" I suggest that writers should be taught the same trick. Then the motto for all would be, not "One ill turn deserves another", but "Do as you would be done by." It would be a delightful change. Unless our criticism can be recognized by all comers as disinterested, it must continue to die as soon as it is born. Hence its lowly position among the arts; hence the spirit of animosity which is fostered by busybodies. Both would go if only we had not this mistrust born of tale telling and spiteful gossip. It is never the original remark that is the cause of trouble, but the repetition; it is never the original judgment that is vicious, but the expression of it in the light of considered prejudices.

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Last month I mentioned that Martin Secker was bringing out a new collected edition of Arthur Symons's works, and also a volume containing all the poetry written to date by Edna St. Vincent Millay. I now learn that he has made an agreement with John Dos Passos, whereby he is to publish the next three or four books of that writer. He is issuing immediately a new book by Gilbert Cannan, consisting of the letters of travel which appeared in the New York "Freeman". Also a couple of essays in psychology and psychoanalysis written by D. H. Lawrence. It would be interesting to

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know what Dr. Joseph Collins thinks of these two last. His own essay on Lawrence, in the book called "The Doctor Looks at Literature", makes amusing and (it seems to me) destructive reading. This book has been read to some extent in England, in copies which have as it were filtered through the post; and although the author's style has been setting the teeth of some of my correspondents on edge, the literary opinions are very vigorous and from a new angle. Indeed, some of them are in their own field the acutest things we have had in the way of appraisement for a long time. The long chapter on Proust, for instance, is most informative, and the chapters on Joyce and Lawrence are very stimulating. There is really no end to the possibility of this style of criticism. Lawrence, by the way, is reported in England, where he is to become an active member of the staff of "The Adelphi". In addition to the two books just mentioned, he has on the point of publication the new novel "Kangaroo", which I spoke of the other month.

* * * *

Rafael Sabatini is not coming to America. That is the sad news which I have for all his admirers — or such of them as may read these words. He is staying in England in his enormous house at Hampstead, which is said— I have not been there — to have anything between three and four tennis lawns, and everything in the same proportion. It is not that Sabatini gives one the idea that he has to have a big house, for he is the most modest of men. But I expect he likes space, as we all do. After all, the craze for being crushed into little houses and tiny rooms must come to an end sooner or later. Sabatini works at the top of this huge house, far away from noise. In that he resembles Thomas Hardy, who has also worked all his life upon the top floor of the house at Dorchester. But this house Hardy built for himself, and no doubt with this purpose. A great deal of press attention has been given to the fact that the Prince of Wales, during his visit to Dorchester, went to the house of Hardy, and lunched there. A photograph of the Prince and his host and hostess has been published, in which all look very grave, as though they cannot think of anything else to say. But letters are looking up when the heir to the throne goes to call upon the greatest writer of his age. I have not heard of any royal visits to Sabatini's house at Hampstead; but no doubt this will come in time.

Speaking of royalty reminds me that there is to be published — for the benefit of some charity as yet unspecified — "The Book of the Queen's Doll's House". In this, together, I suppose, with photographs of the house itself, are to be reprinted the contributions of the various distinguished authors who gave little miniature volumes to the library and reproductions of the pictures and statues contributed by eminent painters and sculptors. The book should thus epitomize the arts of our day, as exhibited by their brightest exponents. I wonder if it will do so. I wonder how some of our authors will like reading in print the little works they contributed to the library. It would be interesting to know.

* * * *

When I spoke just now of John Dos Passos I should have said that he is not in London, but is living in Paris. The first book of his to bear the imprint of Martin Secker is called "Streets of Night", and will be published in the autumn. "Three Sol-

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diers" was published here by Hurst and Blackett, and has had some critical attention. I should say that Dos Passos has a future in England. It is more and more evident here that Sinclair Lewis has captured the town with "Babbitt". "Babbitt" is quoted in the newspapers and in conversation. That shows the extent of the hold he now has upon the reading public. It was once computed that the "book" most quoted in the English newspapers (leaving aside the Bible, which would be very hard to trace, so constant are the allusions to Biblical names and phrases) was the works of Charles Dickens. It does not do to quote anything too recondite in the columns of the press. No mention of any character or incident from the works of Joseph Conrad would be in place. But what Lewis has done has been to dramatize a type, and satirize it, so that all readers rock with laughter and repeat Babbitt's phraseology.

* * * *

I must repeat here a story which I was told the other day. A book is being published here called "Gods of Modern Grub Street", which is written by St. John Adcock, and illustrated with photographs of the various authors dealt with in the text, taken by Hoppé. As my readers may know, there is at the present time enormous propaganda among and upon behalf of the women writers of England. They are tired of being ignored, and regarded as the inferiors of men. And so they "get together" very loyally and praise each other to a degree altogether impressive. It is very natural, and I do not blame them at all, though I think they are barking up the wrong tree. Now it happens that in the book written by Adcock and illustrated by Hoppé only two women are dealt with. I need hardly say that St. John Adcock is the most chivalrous of men, and that the reason for the omission of any other women writers has nothing whatever to do with his chivalry or lack of it. On the contrary. But there has been raised a perfect hue and cry because the only women writers included are May Sinclair and Sheila Kaye-Smith. And so another, supplementary volume, to be devoted entirely to women, is immediately to be prepared. It will contain everybody except the two named (possibly, even, including them), and will be another blow for the emancipation of the feminine sex. This seems to me a strange way of looking at literary excellence, but there is no doubt a vast amount of feminism in the literary world, and it will increase. The volume is, I hear, to be anonymous.

* * * *

A. A. Milne's play "Success", which many people consider much the best thing he has done, has had but a short run here, and began with a bad press. For one thing, the title is against it, for the dramatic critic is very much influenced by such things as titles, and could not have been expected to stomach a play called "Success". Either the title, the dramatic critic must object, is cynical, or it clearly indicates the author's personal aim. It *must* mean *something*. Such is the mentality of the dramatic critic. Milne is to bring out the play by itself almost at once, with a preface for the critics. I doubt whether he will be successful in bringing about a change of heart in them. If anything could have done that it was the genial and teasing prologue and epilogue to Shaw's "Fanny's First Play". "Tell me", said Flawner Bannel, "who wrote it, and I'll tell you if it's a good play." Things have not greatly altered, although on the whole, until he

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seemed to become *too* successful, Milne had as good a press as any successful dramatist of the day. The man who always gets the worst theatrical press in England is Arnold Bennett. The critics are then as birds attacking a brilliant stranger of their own species, and their hands are steeped in Bennett's blood. His mild reply to one of them may be read in the second series of "Things That Have Interested Me". He has not produced a new play since that book appeared, and so it is not yet time to see the result of the protest, made after years of persistent insult. Milne, besides having "Success" on the boards and between them, has been holiday making in Sussex; and I expect he has been finding fresh readers for "The Wind in the Willows". He is one of those gorgeous people who have a favorite book, and it is "The Wind in the Willows". Wherever he goes, he carries news of Kenneth Grahame's masterpiece. It is the most natural thing in the world. Milne, with the zeal of a missioner, finds a benighted person who has not encountered the light. He recommends the book, and a convert is at once made. If there were a pocket edition, I believe he would take copies about with him, but the only available edition at the moment is too substantial for carriage in this way. He is thus reduced to enthusiastic recommendation. The sales of "The Wind in the Willows" must leap forward every month. It is indeed a masterpiece.

* * * *

Other men have different books. Wells has always been praising Cotter Morison's "The Service of Man". Bennett's enthusiasms for years past have been "The Brothers Karamazov" and Herbert Spencer's "Study of Sociology", which he says is like a bath. Hilaire Belloc's joy has been "The Wallet of Kai Lung", which is at last getting known as he has desired. Edward Garnett has probably had more triumphs of enthusiasm than anybody else, but he has been the almost singlehanded trumpeter of C. M. Doughty. Walpole has never tired of recommending "Maurice Guest", by Henry Handel Richardson. With Bernard Shaw the idol has been Butler . . . and so on. Probably every writer has a book or an author whom he hugs to his bosom, and thereafter praises into some sort of fame. You will remember what Stevenson did for William Penn's "The Fruits of Solitude". One of Edward Garnett's resuscitations was Richard Jefferies, and in particular "The Story of My Heart". I must admit that I cannot share the enthusiasm for this book, but Jefferies is a man who has again fallen most wrongly into neglect after a rediscovery. He was a master in his own line. My personal idol, Hazlitt, has at last had justice done to him by P. P. Howe, and if there happened to be a well printed and readable edition of his works in the market I should rally to its support. Unfortunately there is no such edition and the enterprise involved — not to speak of financial outlay — is too much of an undertaking for any commercial publisher. Dent's big edition, limited to five hundred sets in this country, has long been out of print, and there is nothing to take its place beyond single volumes, not all of them accurate or well printed, in various series. These are not enough. I want an edition I can read in comfort. Will not some capitalist, who is also a Hazlitt enthusiast, come forward with the needful? I am sure that Mr. Howe would edit the set to perfection.

SIMON PURE

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THE SKETCH BOOK

CONFESSIONS OF A BLURB WRITER

Anonymous

I DID not begin as a blurb writer. On the contrary, I worked down to it gradually through a long training. I like to think that I began my literary career as a book reviewer. And there is a measure of truth in it, for I did write about books for a weekly magazine in the time that could be spared from opening the office mail, reading manuscripts, cataloguing the library, doing special stories on popcorn, railroad signals, and color photography, interviewing ambassadors to Chile, and making up the magazine — for which complication of duties I received fifteen dollars every Friday. But I counted it a purple patch when a pile of books was laid on my desk and the literary editor said, "Try your hand at these." Like Pendennis in his initiation to "The Pall Mall Gazette", I carried them home in ecstasy and read them through the night. In the morning I was ready with a column of youthful vitriol, Hall Caine being, as I remember it, the victim. The editor was so amused that he ran it unchanged and rewarded me with another pile of books. I later learned that my denunciation of "The Woman Thou Gavest Me" did signal service in selling the book. After that the piles grew in size and variety and, as they must always be subordinated to the routine jobs, Saturday often arrived with little done and the paper going to press Monday morning.

They were astonishingly miscellaneous collections. I had little difficulty with the "Hints for Spring Planting", "Gas Engine Bugbears", "Dry Fly Notes", or "Thousand and One Recipes"; these could be grouped under a "Useful" head and treated with standardized remarks. But the novels and biographies (which latter came seldom) must be packed among the white flannels and tennis shoes in my suitcase and carried off into the weekend. They were happy weekends in that first hot summer of work, and tennis lured out of all proportion to the novels and biographies. Came often a Sunday night with great weariness of body and the books untouched.

Now if this were not a confession completely frank, I should be shamed out of reminiscence on the method of those reviews. Under the circumstances I shall spare no detail. I spread my aching body between the sheets, adjusted the drop light, and arrayed my task before me. One by one I fingered the volumes and jotted rapidly. Here was a new Chambers, a girl in a bathing suit on the jacket; light, unquestionably, and a pleasant little story for summer reading; an alluring love motive, perhaps, but a far from novel permutation of the elderly triangle scheme and the people overdrawn. To be read in a hammock on a lazy afternoon. Here was something with a wooden cowboy astride a wooden horse — cactus in the offing — this would be breezily western with the lure of open spaces under the stars; the long wail of the coyote — yes, here it was on page 16, but stop: "He vaulted into the saddle of his

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cayuse and rode off at a brisk trot." I could hardly let that pass, and it would help me fill out the paragraph and spice it a bit to refer the author to "Points of the Horse".

Now for a biography. Flooded with events (rather too flooded to my way of thinking and better if he had built a dike round the first volume), with noteworthy revelations of a depth of character till now little sounded — I could straighten out the metaphors on the galley proof. Back again to a novel, the last, happily, beginning with an adolescent boy whose parents were concealing something from him (his sex, no doubt); the jacket said it was a daring challenge to the guardians of our nation's youth — but it was positively dishonorable to read the jacket. Ask the next hack reviewer you meet if he reads the jackets and you will merit all his contempt.

Yet even in my lightsome youth I was not without twinges of conscience. I have waked at midnight in a cold sweat, sat up in bed and thought how I had crowded the labored life work of a respected biographer into a half column of my wretched twaddle. But I have invariably gone back to sleep and in the grey dawn conceived something of a cynicism toward all literature. Eventually the glamour dissolved revealing a tedious task, and thus was terminated a long stride in my training.

Came by one day a book publisher who said he had read my reviews. He offered me a position in his house which was alluring in importance if not in salary. If I accepted I should become "publicity manager". Somehow both parts of the title aroused my ambition. I accepted. So was I graduated from the trade of book reviewing to the profession of blurb writing.

As soon as I became associated with a publishing house my friends began to take note of my occupation. "Just what do you do?" they asked, and referred to my work as "interesting". Often they said, "I suppose you write reviews." Why, among the lay public, the belief persists that persons connected with publishing houses write reviews, I cannot discover. But to the outsider, to whom nothing is so fogged in mystery as the intestine workings of the publishing business, it appears plausible. "Not exactly reviews", I replied. "Something more in the nature of appreciations." Blurbs, in short. Jackets. Fall lists. Clip sheets. Gossip. Advertisements. And here I am disclosing intimate things.

In my new position, if my views on literature remained the same my method of expressing them certainly altered. In the first flush of my enthusiasm I brought the full power of my vocabulary into action, but I shortly discovered that my notes lacked "selling value" and that "literary stuff" in advertising was undesirable. The public liked the good old adjectives and would buy the books that were jacketed with them.

All books, I found, were divided broadly into two classes: serious books and fiction. Then there were subdivisions and a stock of adjectives traditional with each. Tragedy was intense, moving, real, stirring, emotional (never tragic); comedy sparkling, bright, merry, mirth provoking, gloom dispelling, redolent of that inimitable humor for which the author, etc., etc. Why the humor of our authors so persistently defied imitation I know not, but so it was. Love was exquisite, alluring, romantic, enchanting; sex was fearless, frank, challenging; romance was instinct with color, fanciful, roving, adventurous. Essays

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were done with an incredibly light touch. I was never allowed to believe that the touch could have been so light. Biographies were invariably revealing. I have never known a biography that was not revealing. Generally it revealed the great man's vital, brilliant, whimsical, strong, or vivid personality. Sociology disclosed the warp and woof, or the inner structure of our civilization, which, as a rule, was crumbling.

In the production of a blurb little reading is required or, indeed, possible. Where I had reviewed by the dozen I blurbed by the hundred. The most rapid method was to seek out an editor who had read the books and put him through a short inquisition somewhat as follows:

"By the way, Bill" — one always approaches an editor casually — "have you read the new Van Bibber?"

"I have."

"What's it like?"

"Rotten."

"What's it about?"

"Southern. Old colonel, same guy that was in that last one of his. George Somebody. Proud. Lives on old planation gone to seed. Daughter falls in love with poor Kentucky boy but decides to marry rich Detroit bounder to buck up the estate. Father objects. I forget how it comes out but they fix it up somehow. Old mammy brings it out all right. Van Bibber tries to make her funny but it doesn't go. Just like the rest of his bunk."

Notes hastily jotted and a glance at the book for proper names, complete the material for the blurb, and the typewriter is soon rattling merrily away.

"Redolent of the sunny atmosphere of the old south," it runs, "this latest of Mr. Van Bibber's charming succession of tales cannot fail to delight his host of readers. It is the love story of the blue eyed, sunny haired daughter of old Colonel Lee whom lovers of these colorful romances will remember as the delightful 'Marse George' of 'Love in Gray'. The beautiful sacrifice of her love for Archie Byrd, a virile Kentucky youth, in order to marry a rich middle westerner and thereby restore the family plantation to prosperity, is prevented by her proud but self-sacrificing father who — but we must not spoil the story. Suffice it to add that a happy dénouement is, after a series of complications, brought about by the aid of an old black mammy whose every word and act is instinct with that irresistible humor for which this author is so justly famous. Even the most ardent lovers of Mr. Van Bibber's earlier romances will surely concede that he has here achieved a story whose tenderness, charm, vivid characterization, and infallible humor have never been surpassed."

But I have given a simple example. There are moments when the editor is away on his vacation, or ill, poor man, or out of town; and the hungry presses wait for no one. Then comes into play the full effort of the imagination, sometimes, I blush to remember, with cataclysmic results. While it is generally safe to describe a book on the basis of the author's former efforts, yet there are occasions when the most hidebound specialist will stray from the path he has beaten out for himself. Many a dyed-in-the-wool detective story author has sneaked off on a dark night and emerged with love in old lavender; not a few buccaneering sea fighters have fallen headlong into a slough of Russian realism. And, I regret to say, an occasional jacket has come off, or at least gone on, the press without noting these *bouleversements*.

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It is shocking indeed to the blurb writer who is proud (as some, I have been told, are) of his profession, to discover that he has solemnly labeled a novel of the "Cranford" variety "the most thrilling complexity of sleuth-defying crime and triumphant detection that this author has yet woven".

Once started, the momentum of a blurb cannot be arrested. Lightly it leaps from fall list to jacket, from jacket to clip sheet, from clip sheet (more often than one would suppose) to newspaper. Its peregrinations are rapid and infinite in extent. I have come upon poor little lonely waifs of my brain many thousand miles from home; staring at me from English bookshops on the Italian Riviera, crowded into the sunlit stalls of the Seine, looking out of the windows of frontier drugstores in the southwest, in the columns of Scandinavian newspapers, maimed often, but never quite out of the hope of recognition by their guilty parent.

After the launching of the book and blurb, the blurb writer turns to his scissors. He clips the reviews as they come, erases the unfavorable portions, substituting dots. This is the easiest of his work to be sure, yet even here there are pitfalls. I remember one of my fellows in a rival plant telling me of a circular he prepared from an ecstatic comment in which the reviewer described his reading of the novel in question.

"So absorbed was I", it ran, "that I forgot the proximity of the stove, up to which, in the chill of my garret, I had huddled. Imagine my surprise when I found I had burned a large hole in the leg of my trousers."

In the hurry of pasting up the circular, the clipping became juxtaposed with another paragraph with no space between, so that when printed the whole appeared over one signature, the trouser episode accredited to a feminine reviewer. My friend never noticed his error until the entire issue of circulars had been mailed, when it was called to his attention by the irate lady in person.

I might go on with these appalling revelations, were space and the patience of my confessors adequately accorded me. But I shall not. Already I have grievously imperiled the safety of my exalted job, and under the circumstances the justification of my anonymity will not, I think, be successfully disputed.

DENMARK'S GREATEST

By Robert Hillyer

WE had gone about half way through the letters of introduction given us by the American-Scandinavian Foundation. The next one was addressed to Herr Johannes V. Jensen. "Well," said my Danish friend, "you can present it, but I don't think it will do you much good." Foster Damon and I smiled slyly at one another; we had just had a rather amusing experience with our letter to Georg Brandes, who had sequestered himself in Olympian thunder clouds. "Mr. Jensen is an extremely retiring personality. I don't think he ever sees anyone except a very small circle of old friends."

I thought it over. The letter to Johannes V. Jensen was the climax of my introductions. He is beyond any doubt the greatest of Denmark's living authors, and although mere desire to meet celebrities has never been one of my vices, still I was in Copenhagen to taste of Danish literature, and I

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did not like the idea of foregoing the *pièce de résistance*. Finally I decided on a compromise. I asked one of the authorities at the university to negotiate over the telephone. I had small written, and less spoken, Danish at the time; nevertheless, my anxious ears followed my mediator's opening phrase: "A young American, Herr Hillyer, with a letter of introduction . . . What? . . . Yes, an American." I waited. Then: "Mr. Jensen will be pleased to have you call any afternoon, if you will telephone in advance", said my friend casually.

A few days later I was taking afternoon tea at Jacobysalle 2, with the poet and his wife. He is rather small of stature; his smooth shaven face seems more American than Danish, partly because of the tortoise shell spectacles that are the badge of Americanism to Europeans. I know that he is about fifty, but he looks much younger, possibly thirty-five. There is a wiry nervousness, almost a jerkiness, about his every word and gesture, but the discerning will sense at once the great calm of the man's spirit and the clear decisiveness of his mind. Fru Jensen is the ideal Danish wife and mother, the pure blonde type, kindly, expansive, and humorously wise. Where was the aloofness, the forbidding silence, against which I had been warned? I never experienced it. During our year in Denmark, Mr. Damon and I saw much of the Jensens, and all our memories of them are of cordial hospitality; not only the hospitality that smilingly bestows food and drink, but the real hospitality of the mind, the liberal exchange of ideas. This was partly because we were strangers: no true Dane will ever show himself ungenerous to the stranger within his gates; and it was largely because we were Americans. The delicate contempt of Europe for America does not exist in Denmark. True, the man in the street thinks, as do all good Europeans, that we have revolvers in our pockets, gum in our mouths, and an accent quite incomprehensible to those who speak real English. Everyone has heard of the enterprising shopkeeper in Rome who displays the sign: English Spoken, American Understood. If the Danish man in the street believes strange things of us, he believes them not with contempt, but with a friendly interest. And the educated Danes have an enthusiastic admiration for this country. They all speak English, and the majority have crossed the Atlantic to make our acquaintance. Many of the young people come to our universities to complete their study. Denmark's greatest author has been here many times. His parting words to me after our first meeting were, "I shall not be able to get to America this year, so I hope to see much of you, instead."

Johannes V. Jensen is the founder of a new tradition in Danish literature, and it is safe to say that those who follow him will find little material left for them to develop. Since Oehlenschläger, at the beginning of the last century, established the nationalistic tone of Danish literature, it has been the convention for Danish writers to concentrate on the inspiration afforded by their own country. Naturally, in spite of the richness of Danish history and the pastoral beauty of Danish landscape, this mine soon became worked out. Johannes V. (as his countrymen call him) has taken over the nationalistic tradition and made of it the tradition of the whole human race. He is from Jutland, the focus of the Scandinavian race. To him, Jutland is the source of that yearning

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unrest which drives mankind on and on over the earth, forever seeking, and never finding, satisfaction of his eternal wanderlust. The idea is not merely a poetic patriotism; it is speculatively scientific. Herr Jensen combines a philosophical perspective with a conscientious searching of historic and scientific material. "Christopher Columbus" is the title of the last book of a series describing the wanderings of the white race. (The first two parts of this cycle have now been made available to American readers as "The Long Journey: Fire and Ice".) To the author, Christopher Columbus is the great Viking. That is poetry. Christopher Columbus was a blond Lombard; the Lombards came to Italy from Viking Scandinavia. That is science. While Herr Jensen was writing his "Columbus", he informed me, he was reading over all the literature concerned with the actual life of his hero. Nevertheless, he never lost sight of Columbus as the vast, shadowy symbol of Viking unrest. That is the unusual combination of sweeping vision and infinite pains possessed only by the most powerful artists.

Of course, some of the academic scientists are raging. For Herr Jensen has agilely leaped over many a chasm which they are slowly filling in, grain by grain. Was there ever a philosopher or artist, using the materials of science, who did not set the scientists raging? And the curious thing is that science, planting its feet firmly at last on some long dubious ground, cries out in triumph only to see art vanishing in the distance, thumbing its Delphic nose.

The day "Christopher Columbus" was published, I asked the author if he did not feel a bit flat now that the magnum opus was out of the way. No, he was going to take a rest; perhaps he would come to America. For any particular object? To study eugenics. He has explored the soul of the race from generation unto generation, now he is interested in the physical development. Here again, the man shows that he is primarily a poet. Eugenics is to him the vast panorama of race-rising and race-declining; the perspective is of the centuries, although the detail is actual. In spite of his faith in the single source of aspiring quest, he has the highest hopes in the "mongrel" races, taking the English as a present, and the Americans as a future example. He believes the ultimate triumph of humanity to consist of a combination of the best in all the races and the dying out of all weaker elements. What part deliberate scientific control is to play in this development, he did not explain. According to him the process is essentially natural and, if I understood correctly, must be fostered and accelerated by the intelligence of science. He declares that taking a casual crowd, such as the miscellaneous contents of a tram, he can pick out those whose race will vanish and those whose race will contribute to the eventual man. The conception is stimulating, and knowing Johannes V. Jensen, I am confident he will shape it into something of significant beauty.

He is Denmark's greatest author and poet. His poetry is firm yet visionary, embodying again his twofold power. He generally uses old forms, swinging measure of ballad or early Scandinavian metre, for the expression of ideas sometimes realistic, sometimes symbolic. We should know his work. France has him, Germany has him, Denmark possesses him, but his poems have never been translated into our tongue with the humble exception of a few Englished by S.

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Foster Damon and myself, versions which he was gracious enough to commend. A keen hater of journalistic methods and self-advertisement, he never pushes himself forward and never will. Why does it take a Nobel Prize to awaken America's interest in good writing? With all respect to its worthier recipients, that prize is at best a poor criterion. When Johannes V. Jensen again comes to this country that he has appreciated so fairly, he should be known to discerning readers. But he would not like, nor even endure, the yellow journal salvos that generally salute writers who may or may not be of any worth. He is a sincere artist, a cordial host, and a great admirer of the one nation that has just begun to hear his name.

LE PETIT THEATRE DU VIEUX CARRE

By Lucile Rutland

With a Wood Block by Edward L. Tinker

THE Little Theatre movement of today has its parallels in the very dawn of all dramatic history. It does not seem such a far cry, after all, to that first "Community Chorus" around the rustic altar on which a goat was sacrificed to Dionysos. Since the word "tragedy" comes from the *tragos ode* (goat song) sung at that religious — or, if you insist, irreligious — ceremonial, it appears, then, that a goat song became the matrix of all drama. Though perhaps we should date its inception even further back than the Dionysian period: to those first dramatis personæ, Adam and Eve, whose genius for tragedy (unsurpassed either before or after their time) contrived to make humanity the sacrificial "goat".

But the drama, like man himself, scorns mortal origin and claims its genesis in nothing less than the adventures of a god. So it remained for Dionysos, the personification of the creative element in life, its natural forces and passions, to inspire the common people to assume the first dramatic rôles. With a sacred altar for "down centre", transformed into Satyr or Pan or Silenus by the simple expedient of wearing goat skins, they sang or recited the exploits of their god. So came the Greek drama, from the heart of the people themselves. And so has come the Little Theatre movement; from the heart of that same humanity, groping through self-expression ever upward toward the source of life. Since the adventures of Dionysos are eternal, dramatizations of life's seedtime and harvest, ebb and flow, its potencies and passions, are the deathless goat song of humanity: the word made flesh.

It is a significant fact that the first Théâtre Libre of our day was organized in a wine cellar in Paris by one Monsieur Antoine, and held its rehearsals in an inspiriting environment of wine casks. To this first Little Theatre, projected by the laity like the old Dionysia, the world owes its introduction to the plays of Brieux; to Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy as dramatic possibilities; and to the one act plays of Strindberg, Wedekind, and Schnitzler.

Since then, the Little Theatre movement has spread like a conflagration: from Paris to Petrograd, from Cracow to Chicago, from Dublin to Detroit, from Wisconsin to Washington Square; and, at last, to the Vieux Carré 'way down in old New Orleans.

About four years ago, Mrs. James Oscar Nixon, protagonist of visions for New Orleans, organized Le Petit

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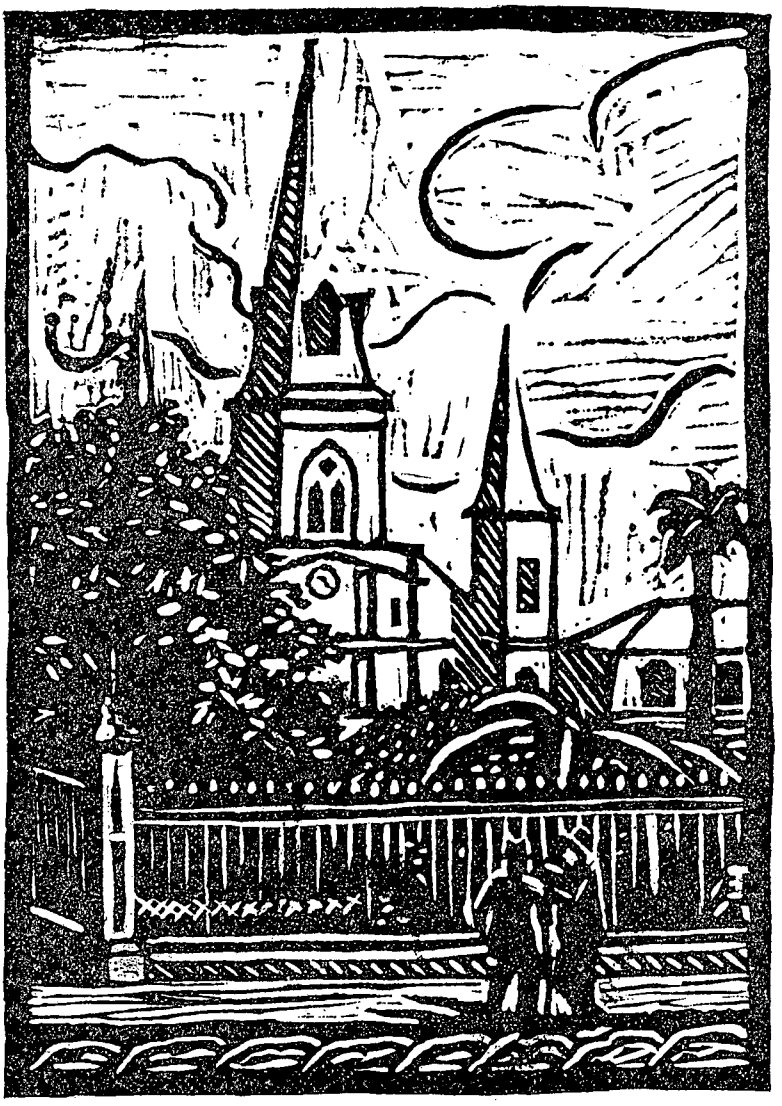

The old St. Louis Cathedral seen from across Jackson Square, formerly called the Place d'Armes

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Théâtre du Vieux Carré. She had the enthusiastic support of other women and men who had always seen and read good plays, but who had never before tried to act them. In seeking for the right soil in which to plant this perennial flower of their dreams, they went instinctively to the Vieux Carré, sacred to Clio and Mnemosyne.

On one side of the Old Square flows the Mississippi river; on the opposite side stands the "Holy Cathedral" donated to the city more than a century ago by Don Andres Almonaster y Roxas, of "the Kingdom of Andalusia", Knight of the Royal Order of Charles III; and the two remaining sides of the Old Square are formed by the historic Pontalba Buildings, erected by that Baroness de Pontalba (daughter of the Knight from Andalusia) who lived there in oriental splendor long years ago. It was she who had the name of the Square changed from Place d'Armes to Jackson Square; and who witnessed, from the Moorish balcony of one of her series of mansions, the unveiling of Clark Mills's equestrian statue of Jackson that stands in the centre of the Square today.

So, Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré found its habitation and its name in a corner mansion of this old row of Pontalba Buildings. With dramatic symbolism, the structure faces the sunrise. And it is the same mansion which the hospitable Baroness Pontalba once lent as hospice to Jenny Lind, when she visited New Orleans at the height of her fame. The originators of this Little Theatre scrubbed the floors themselves, washed the dust of ages from the windows, painted the walls and scenery, and built the stage. This work of love was done by society women, artists, musicians, journalists, interior decorators, lawyers, clergymen, university professors, members of the Cotton Exchange, and even a day laborer who paid his membership fee and was, at last, discharged from the union for working overtime and without pay at the Little Theatre!

Then, when this new altar to an old god was ready for the first offering, the fairies themselves sent Lord Dunsany up the winding stairs to the "upper room furnished" where, unexpectedly, he officiated at the opening of Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré. Because the room was so small and Lord Dunsany was so large, that first audience felt justified in hoping that he would never succeed in getting out and so, perforce, remain as a permanent attraction. They tell proudly how they have "broken through three walls" in the old mansion since that memorable première. Whether this had to be done for the liberation of the Irish Lord, or merely in a spirit of bravado, does not appear.

The membership soon grew to such proportions that the plays had to be given on three consecutive nights, to accommodate all who held membership tickets. Any other sort of ticket is unobtainable, even though one speak for it with the tongue of man and of angel. For commercialism would be a profanation in the Vieux Carré; the actors there are all amateurs (in experience, if not in performance) who would scorn to serve their god, as Tommy Tucker sang, for their suppers. At a performance of Dunsany's "A Night at an Inn", the hardened Toffy was splendidly enacted by a local clergyman. And in one of the comedies on that evening's program was a white haired Tulane University professor who had to wear a brown wig to give verisimilitude to the youthful character which he was portraying.

This is the only Little Theatre in

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America that is bilingual. It has given almost as many plays in French as in English, among the French plays being Daudet's "L'Arlésienne". Of the plays given in English, "Riders to the Sea", Maeterlinck's "Interior", Murray's "Spring", and Dunsany's "A Night at an Inn" stand out as artistic triumphs. Besides, several fine things by local playwrights have been produced.

Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré has become a literal playhouse for New Orleans artistic circles. Almost any day one may stroll in there and find women and men busy at the task of beautifying it, the women with work aprons on, the men in shirt sleeves; every one of them eagerly striving to

> Bring Beauty from its star
> To hide the blemish and the scar.

And when they grow tired, some "leading lady", with the dual soul of an artiste and a housewife, lights the little gas stove in the Green Room and makes Creole coffee. Then all the artists and the artizans gather on the iron grilled balcony overlooking the Vieux Carré and the old Cathedral to drink the cup that cheers but not inebriates — and talk and talk! Not of Mnemosyne nor of Clio, hovering in the background; but of art — that god whose adventures make the deathless goat song of humanity.

THE LOTUS OF ISIS

By Charmion von Wiegand

PAIN
Is a red lotus
Sprouting in my heart.

With my blood
Have I nourished its roots.

With my tears
Have I dampened its leaves.

An army of unsheathed swords
Are its shining petals
Piercing my breast.

A candle of gold
Is its calyx
Illumining my feet in darkness.

Bloom forever, O sacred flower of Isis,
For when you wither, my love will be dead.

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AMELIA BARR AND THE NOVICE

By Kate Dickinson Sweetser

I HAD rung the door bell and was waiting to be ushered into the presence of my heroine of literary achievement, that I might express my deep appreciation of her "Bow of Orange Ribbon", "Jan Vedder's Wife, and "Friend Olivia", then my favorite novels. That, let me say, was long years ago, when I was very young, very intense, and vastly aspiring.

Thrilled, but rather frightened, I was waiting. While I stood there I framed a sentence suitable for use when I should be formally ushered into the presence of the popular writer. The sentence was to begin, "We, your new neighbors, are all greatly honored by the —", but it was never finished. The door was suddenly opened, and before me stood a large woman of a distinctly English type, and beside her stood a still larger dog, variety unknown. The aspect of both was sinister, and I hesitated.

"Well," demanded the Person, "what do you wish?" I feebly stated that I should like to see Mrs. Barr, in fact had been invited to call on her at that time. The expression of my questioner's face changed. She laughed. "Mercy child, come in!" she invited. "*I* am Mrs. Barr. Of course I didn't know you. From your prim little note I thought you were a dried up old maid, not an infant!"

Infant indeed! . . . We crossed the threshold, and as I stepped into the hall the dog rose on his haunches and laid two massive paws on my shoulders. I drew back, as who would not? "He won't hurt you", assured his mistress. "He is only welcoming you." The huge beast then removed his paws, to my great relief, and I followed Mrs. Barr into what was known in those days as a "parlor".

To my disappointment I found another visitor there, a minister well known in the town and, as I afterward learned, a close friend of Mrs. Barr's. At the time I remember my surprise at the attack and defense method of their conversation. They were talking of matters religious, he defending the Protestant faith, she boldly challenging its dogma, comparing it unfavorably with that of the Roman Catholic church. As I understood that she was the daughter of an English clergyman, and as the tone of her books was so distinctly Protestant, I was bewildered. Not until I knew her far better did I come to realize that she would always take the opposite side of any question, whether for the sake of argument or simply because of a strange contrary side to her nature, I never knew. Privately I think the latter. A most extraordinary personality was that possessed by Amelia Barr.

Being so much younger than the other visitor, I made no attempt at self-assertion. I had no chance even to declare my admiration for Mrs. Barr's aforementioned books. Of my passionate desire to become a writer I breathed no word, and before the reverend gentleman and Mrs. Barr

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had half finished their religious controversy I rose to go, with a heavy heart. True, I had met and come in personal contact with my literary idol, but evidently that brief episode was to be the only outcome of my letter to her, in which I had asked if I might call on the famous author, lately become a resident of our town. This then was beginning and end. Mrs. Barr, though discouraging, was kindly as she bade me goodby.

"I am sorry not to return your visit", she said. "I have not time to call on anyone. I work almost all day and sometimes far into the night. But if you care to come here again I shall be glad to see you if I am not too much occupied."

I thanked her and went out, feeling that the chapter was closed. But feeling is not always an accurate barometer. Some weeks later my mother, who happened to be at a front window of our home, called me and asked, "Who *is* this strange person coming in? Do you know?"

I looked out over her shoulder and saw — Mrs. Barr! Yes, there she was in what I always called her "war paint", for she had a great liking for primitive color schemes in her costumes. She was alighting from a cab when I saw her. Next she walked rapidly up to the house. She wore some sort of red outer garment that trailed behind her, while a large pink feather waved from her bonnet. My heart beat fast — why had she come, when she had said she never made calls? "It's Amelia Barr!" I exclaimed and dashed down the stairs to open the door as unceremoniously as hers had been opened to me — only there was no awful dog. Graciously she entered the house and was ushered into the living room. Accepting a proffered chair, she looked into my flushed face. "You see I came, after all, child", she said. "It is the first call I have paid in many months. Sit down."

I sat. Still looking sharply at me, she asked, "Do you write?" I felt a tide of crimson flooding my whole body at this sudden and intimate question. It was as if she had asked me to take off my clothes in public. I stammered, "Why, I suppose every young person does a little scribbling", but this did not satisfy her. "I saw it in your face", she declared. "Poetry?" I shook my head and smiled feebly. "Not so bad as that. Prose mostly" — then I waited, thinking that her keen grey eyes would never stop searching my face. Impulsively she spoke:

"I liked the way you *listened* the day you came to see me", she said. "I saw in your face many things that would mean nothing to the average observer, and I knew you were disappointed not to see me alone. So I have come to you, and this is the reason. I want you to bring me the best of what you have written — it is mostly prose, you say. I will criticize it carefully and tell you whether you ought to become a wife and mother or whether you have the making of a good writer in you. I think you have. I have done this for more than one man or woman who is before the public today. I have taken a fancy to help you. . . . Well?"

Her question was the result of a long pause on my part. I was feeling and looking very solemn. To make a decision, almost between breaths, and such a decision — one which might result in forcing an issue between life and literature, before I had been able to try either one — was no light matter. No wonder I hesitated. Why, just suppose . . . The thread of my argument with myself was sharply

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broken by the practical realization that my guest was waiting for an answer. I must reply. Probably never again would such an opportunity come my way.

"Why yes", I said. "It is — that is — it is too wonderful. You are too kind. My things are not worth the trouble — but if —"

Mrs. Barr rose in the middle of the sentence and laid a hand on my arm. "Then it is settled, my dear", she said. "I will let you know when I have a period of leisure after the book I am finishing is off my hands, then you shall come. I *think* you have a message."

A moment later she had gone, although I begged her to stay and meet mother, who had been leaning over the banisters in quite as great a state of excitement as my own. But Mrs. Barr showed no interest in my relatives, and wished it clearly understood that my possible talent and its cultivation were her only concern. Having done what she came to do, she drove away, leaving me in a state of mind to be appreciated only by those who at some time have faced a like opportunity and its not improbable results.

A month later I received the following note, after I had sent her a calendar I had compiled:

DEAR MISS SWEETSER,

Thank you for your pretty Calendar. I will gladly use it. All I said I meant. I shall finish my novel in a week or less if God wills, and then if you can bear honest advice and criticism, I should like you to come over here, bring your best Mss. (prose especially) and I will go over them with you. Between books I always take a few days' rest, and I shall find it rest to do this.

Your friend

AMELIA E. BARR.

P. S. I will send you word when I am at liberty.

As I reread this letter now, after many years, the phrase "if God wills" strikes a note of sharp contrast between the attitude of mind behind the sentence and that of the writers of our best sellers today. At that time book making was a serious affair, necessitating a partnership with no less an authority than the Deity himself, while we of this decade "go it alone", with an eye fixed on the possibilities of screen production. It is an open question whether, having become a partner, a kindly providence may not more than once have guided Mrs. Barr's pen along the lines of success. She told me later that many a time, with no idea for a story in mind, by turning to the Book of Books she would find a ready to write plot, reverently accept it as an inspiration, and never fail to have good sales for the finished product.

Ten days after the receipt of her first note, came the summons that was to map out my future. Mrs. Barr (and the dog) met me at the door and took me into a room made cheery by a glowing wood fire. Did I mind if one of her daughters heard my stories too? I most certainly did mind but dared not say so. A chair was offered me. I took it. Near me my hostess, in a voluminous and uniquely fashioned green tea gown, took a seat where she could watch me closely, and nodded to me to begin. I unfolded a story titled "The Lost Dime", written on ruled foolscap paper, a tale full of real pathos and sentiment — or at least so I thought before I began to read it aloud. But as its sentences echoed through that quiet room they sounded hopelessly crude, inadequate, impossible. . . . I read on to the end, laid the manuscript on my lap and waited. The dog at Mrs. Barr's feet snored; her daughter rose and offered me a

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glass of water. Still no comment from Mrs. Barr. Then: "Have you anything else with you?" Yes, I had. "Read it", she commanded. I chose an allegory which had seemed a marvel of vivid coloring and subtle imagery until now, when it became only a collection of meaningless words and phrases. Why had I ever dreamed of being equal to such an ordeal? When I folded up the story Mrs. Barr said quietly, "I see you have another one. Please read that too."

Another! Would my nerve hold out? Bravely I read a lurid melodrama of love and intrigue that embodied all I did *not* know about life. Then I folded my hands over the pile of pages in my lap and awaited my doom, murmuring, "That's all." Suddenly as with an impelling impulse Mrs. Barr rose, came to my side, bent down and kissed me on the forehead. It was my christening!

A half hour later, exhausted but thrilled, and regardless of impending spinsterhood, I rushed home and told my tale with the gusty emotion of a young whirlwind:

"Yes, it's all right. She was perfectly lovely! The next day she has time she is going to send for me and pick one of my stories to pieces, and I will keep rewriting it till she says it is good enough to publish, then she will give me a letter of introduction to some publisher she knows. Oh, and I can go to her study sometimes and see the way she does it. Isn't it wonderful?"

Then came the great day when I found myself in the study where the wonderful books were written. With awe I looked around me at the rows of reference books, the big open dictionary on a convenient stand, the desk at which She sat and wrote. Beside her desk, on the floor, lay a high pile of blank books, numbered and lettered, filled with notes on all sorts of subjects gathered by Mrs. Barr from many sources during her years of literary work. One contained facts about birds of South America, another, costumes of the Orient, still another, myths and superstitions of the Old World and the New, etc., etc. In fact, in those little books lay a priceless mine of information into which the novelist could dip at will, in creating the "atmosphere" of a book.

Mrs. Barr opened a drawer of her desk and showed its contents with a smile. *Cake!* "I can always work better if I am munching something," she explained, "and so I have a great many goodies sent me by admirers, mostly those I have never seen. This", taking the lid off a tin box and uncovering a big loaf of black cake, "came from a girl in Texas, who read of my fondness for it in a magazine article about me. These", opening a box of cookies, crisp and sugary, "came from a young housekeeper in Maine, and there are a half dozen other kinds down in the pantry, waiting their turn to be sampled. So you see", she explained laughingly, "we all have our little weaknesses. But this is not criticizing your work, my dear. Please begin."

I had brought the story of a child called "Nob'dy". Mrs. Barr bade me read it through twice, then went over it with me page by page, calling my attention to faults of construction and grammar. With these corrected she said it might be salable. I went home in a trance, dreaming of fame to be had for the asking. I went to work on the little story at once. After I had revised it three times according to her criticisms she gave me a list of publishers to send it to, using her name as my sponsor. At the end of the let-

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ter enclosing the addresses she said:

Take courage. You will do very well. Do not be afraid of work, and above all do not get discouraged if your work comes back. *Let them send it back.* Some day they will send to you for it. Everything comes to those who can wait.

One day I sent her a "poem" hot from the oven, and a very fine piece of work according to my judgment. Two days later came Mrs. Barr's opinion of it:

If you suffer me to tell you "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" then I say with regard to your poem, it is too good not to be made better. The last verse is spoiled by the fourth and seventh lines,—the whole is spoiled by your metre which is not orthodox in any sense. Only great geniuses like Walt Whitman or your own cousin [Emily Dickinson] may defy rules and indeed you do not realize how you hamper and cramp yourself, nor what injustice you do yourself by such an uncomfortable metre as you have chosen. Now Dear, *try again.* Put the same pretty conceit as you have in these two hard-to-read verses into a metre of eight syllables in each alternate line. That is, to English speaking ears, the most delightful of metres. It's the easiest for the tyro and it suits the popular taste and comprehension. Then six syllables in alternate lines, thus;

The harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
As if that soul were fled.

There are other metres equally easy, and as you must be content for a little while to write for the great class of mediocre intelligence, it is necessary, though you could do better, to write what that class like. Editors of journals, catering to their public, choose what the people like, not what they themselves like. I have been in the Astor Library every day for nearly a week, and I thought of you often. How its still air of delightful studies would soothe and please you, and what a great pleasure it would have been to show you how to gather the honey in those wide pastures for your own little hive. . . I am telling you the absolute truth when I say you have all the natural ability necessary to make a great writer. What you need is study! Study! Study! and again Study and practice! So if God gives you health, all is in your own hand.

Y'r Friend,
A. E. Barr.

Having tried to revise the "poem", called "Sweetheart", I sent it back to my teacher, and in return had a letter which concluded:

I think there is the rough material in you for a good writer, but I begin to fear you are either unbelieving as to what I have said about the necessity of *Culture,* or that you have not the physical strength or mental inclination. I notice your remark about "company preventing you, etc". Now Literature is a jealous mistress. You must give her your *whole* time or you will find part time of no avail. My dear, I am telling you the honest truth. If you can bear it there is good stuff in you, and everything is possible. If I displease you, at least give me the credit of wishing sincerely to do whatever is best and kindest to you.

I am
Sincerely your Friend,
Amelia E. Barr.

A story I had written at white heat of enthusiasm and felt sure would evoke praise, brought this:

You have not done yourself justice in this story, if I may speak frankly and kindly to you. It is too hastily written and shows all the signs of haste — poor construction — you can do far better, tautology and diffuseness. I pay you the greatest compliment in daring to speak so frankly to you. Also I trust to your real literary taste on revision to perceive what I say . . . If you desire the finest model for short stories, get "The Odd Number"; or I will lend it to you. Nothing could be better in this line than they are. They are masterpieces. French, of course, but nothing in American Literature within the circumference of the globe approaching them. And you *must* study the finest models, for, I assure you, Literature, like Music, Art, Law or any other profession is a thing no-one has intuitively. It needs an apprenticeship to its first efforts. It needs constant study to attain its highest rewards. I told you about the Astor Library. But my dear, think twice before you accept the position of a scholar and writer . . . You have the entrance to what is called "society". I assure you society looks with suspicion and dislike upon excellences it never can hope to reach. If you dare to be sensible in it you will be disliked and envied — you may guess what that means — and if there is anything the young man of today fears, it is a woman with an idea in her head. You see, he might be called upon to supplement it and so show the poverty of the land.

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But then again, there is no society in the world equal to the highest literary society, none so kindly, so witty, so wise. People who have once tasted its charms are spoiled for all other, and can well afford to feel the utmost indifference to the silly chatter of Fashionable life. You must make your choice. You cannot be both Fashionable and Literary,—the two things are as incompatible as water and fire. And you are young, and I assure you Literature means study, hard work, hard thought, absolute devotion. I cannot tell you how nobly learning repays her votaries. I can only say that after twenty years of this devotion I am more in love with study and labor among books than I ever was, and that I survey honestly the world as I know it, either really or by information and say gratefully "I am the happiest woman in the world." You see what a long letter I have written you before I go to my own daily work. It is the first time I have spoken so at length to anyone for many years. I hope you will take every word as kindly as I mean it.

Yours truly
AMELIA E. BARR.

A very intense person was Amelia Barr both in her prejudices and her likings. She was never lukewarm in anything and often took violent dislikes for no apparent reason. When she opened the door, as she frequently did, she usually carried a pistol, "in case anyone comes who might be unpleasant", she explained one day when I had seen the shining thing. More than once my mother went to the house to carry some delicacy or flowers to Mrs. Barr's invalid daughter, but never was she asked to enter. One day in a burst of affection Mrs. Barr gave me an entire set of her books, and wrote my name in each volume. It was to me a wonderful gift and I was almost overpowered by it. Somehow I stammered my thanks and said I would send for the books the next morning, at which time a man to carry them would be available. When I stated this, Mrs. Barr asked, "Can't he come today?" I explained that he could not. The next morning, when he went for the books, Mrs. Barr said they were "packed up", whatever that may have meant, and I never saw one of them again! Just eccentric, whimsical, a bit autocratic was the literary heroine of my girlhood.

But she was a wonderful teacher, working tirelessly to mold whatever ability I might have into successful achievement. None came, and I began seriously to doubt my calling. I said something of the kind to her, whereupon she ended a letter in this way:

Now dear, we only stumble into the right place, and I would act on the presumption that you have not yet found your best sphere. . . .

Read carefully Mrs. Cruger's "Vampires". It is the most admirable society story I have ever seen by an American writer. Give up short stories, which are the very hardest of all to write, and try to write one the length of "Vampires". If you persevere you will not lose your labor. I am going up to the mountains in a few days, but if you come up to New Windsor I shall see you. And at any rate write for any advice or sympathy you need. You will not ask in vain.

From that time I corresponded with Mrs. Barr only in a desultory way, having for the most part a rather sad tale of rejections to tell. My literary prop being removed to such a distance, I felt flabby mentally, with more than one doubt in my mind as to the wisdom of forever renouncing normal life for that of possible failure along more spectacular lines of work.

Having expressed this doubt in a long letter to Mrs. Barr, I received what I consider the gem of my correspondence with her, so fine is its advice, and so clear cut is the picture it gives of her intensity when in the clutches of a definite dislike, just or unjust. To be fair, I must say that her enthusiasms were of an equally violent and biased variety. This is the letter:

I am sorry for your continued failure, my dear, but you cannot expect any other re-

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sult while you still continue a "Society Belle". Society and Literature are as far asunder as East and West. Brains are the one thing not wanted in society, they are indispensable in literature. Will you keep in mind that I was twenty years a close student in the Astor Library before I wrote my first novel? Study, and read, and by the time you are forty you will be ready to write something. . . .

A good many of the 400 I am told belong to our Club "The Storm King". I was an "Honorary" guest at the opening . . . I met there a delightful young man whose father is a Banker, and who has written a play and is coming up to read it to me. After all, you see, there are cases of "Brains" in Society, at least if the play is good I may say so . . . My house has been lovely all summer and I have had hundreds of callers from all parts, and oh the glory of this mountain! I think of nothing fit to describe it but that line of Milton's "The Hill which God called Paradise".

I certainly never want to see East Orange again. Its memory is like a dreadful nightmare. And that dreadful ride between Orange and New York! It is like the road to Tophet,— the marshes, the dreadful half-made poverty stricken villages, the ash-heaps, the abattoirs, the whole atmosphere reeking of sin and sorrow and human labor. I never felt as if an Angel could get through it, and God seemed so far, so far away. And the people with their small struggles and small talk, their pretensions and negrophobia — how terrible it strikes me now I am outside its influence. Except yourself and the W——s I try to forget everything and every one in the wretched place. Come up here and see the difference!

Quite an arraignment that, of a poor little prosperous and entirely innocent community boasting many natural advantages, and having among its residents one of the greatest inventors of our age, not to mention scores of other highly educated and artistic folk, who had all expressed their pleasure in welcoming the lady of the scornful mien. Some of them had even aided her in the then difficult task of securing a maid of all work — hence the "negrophobia"! And so there might be cases of "Brains in Society", after all, and in a young man at that! And even the "400" were not to be scorned when massed together in a club, with A. E. B. as an "Honorary" guest!

I was so provoked by that letter that I did not answer it. But a year later, without referring to it, I wrote her that as yet success had not come my way, but that I was determined to "make good" some day and some way. Immediately I had this reply:

My Dear Kate,

I have only time to say, I admire your grit! If you only could — or would — go to the Astor Library and write Encyclopædia articles for the Press, it might help until you were more prepared for fiction. If you come this way, call. I will be glad to see you. I could not have written these few lines if I had not felt the greatest admiration for your pluck. Try again!

Yours truly

A. E. Barr.

I never had the opportunity to call on her in Cornwall, and received but one more letter from her. Meanwhile, not being able to work in the Library, I was following out an idea of my own, that of making a book of child character stories from the novels of Dickens. It proved a fascinating adventure in the realm of literary enterprise, but like all my other attempts seemed doomed to failure. However, I kept on sending the manuscript from publisher to publisher until —

Accepted! Of course I sent Mrs. Barr word of my good fortune at once, laying the laurels at the feet of her who had been my guide and inspiration. This was her reply, the last word I ever received from her:

I am truly glad of your success. You deserve it. I never saw a little woman with more real *grit*. I told you it was only a question of "hold on", and no-one is to be praised but yourself, for no-one can really do anything for another in literary work. It must be personal effort, personal bravery and persistence. There is no favor and no royal road.

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TO SEE OR NOT TO SEE

Plays and Motion Pictures of the Month

By John Farrar

PLAYS IN NEW YORK WORTH SEEING

1. CHILDREN OF THE MOON: *A psychological tragedy, uneven, but with a superb second act and a fine cast. (Reviewed below.)*

2. IN LOVE WITH LOVE: *A little better than Vincent Lawrence's other "sweetheart play",* TWO FELLOWS AND A GIRL. *Lynn Fontanne has been highly praised in it by the critics. An amusing evening. (Reviewed below.)*

3. THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE: *Fine Shaw comedy capably acted and amusingly current in its satire on Puritanism.*

4. RAIN: *Jeanne Eagels still triumphs in this study of religion suddenly gone wrong in the South Seas.*

5. SEVENTH HEAVEN: *A fantastic story of repression unleashed, with a war background.*

6. MAGNOLIA: *Booth Tarkington at his best in a satirical romantic comedy in which Leo Carillo appears with ease and charm. (To be reviewed next month.)*

7. MERTON OF THE MOVIES: *This burlesque of the movies with a sob behind the laughter still continues to please.*

8. AREN'T WE ALL? *Genial English social comedy enlivened by the presence of Cyril Maude.*

9. BALIEFF'S CHAUVE-SOURIS: *The Russian potpourri returns as gay as ever for a limited engagement. (To be reviewed next month.)*

10. *Madge Kennedy in* POPPY *(to be reviewed next month) is the treat of the musical comedy season.* LITTLE JESSIE JAMES *and* HELEN OF TROY, NEW YORK *are amusing music plays.* WILD FLOWER *still delights. Of the revues,* EARL CARROLL'S VANITIES *is by far the best, with* GEORGE WHITE'S SCANDALS *making an artistic second and* ARTISTS AND MODELS *(reviewed below) selling out as a shocker.*

THE early theatrical season finds a play of practically every type plunging forward. Domestic drama, lighter type, has "Two Fellows and a Girl" and "In Love with Love" (though the latter, strictly speaking, might be classed rather as pre-domestic). Domestic drama, heavier type, has "Home Fires". Downright tragedy has "Children of the Moon". Slender satire has the innocuous "Tweedles". Old fashioned melodrama has "The Breaking Point" and "Red Light Annie". Success drama has "We've Got to Have Money". So it goes. A play for every appetite.

Of some importance is the blooming of Vincent Lawrence. As seen briefly

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on the stage for a curtain speech he looks young and shy. He can write plays. His dialogue is natural, brisk, entertaining. His situations are often excellent. He can handle a scene which deals with ordinary but poignant emotions in a truly grand manner. He has an engaging habit of inserting fanciful bits of pleasantry which do not, in the strictest sense, belong in his plays yet which are ornamental. "Two Fellows and a Girl" was produced by George M. Cohan. It is therefore easeful and not without Cohan trickery; still Mr. Lawrence's naturalness is apparent. His theme is practically universal — the more or less good humored struggle of two men for the same girl — without melodramatic complications. The men are both decent. They are friendly. They are persistent. The girl thinks she loves them both. She flips a coin to decide which she shall marry, sticks by her luck, and then not so very much happens; but it is all kindly and the play is filled with laughter. Its chief defect is, I suppose, the one which is indicated by Mr. Cohan's own description. He has called it "the American sweetheart play". It is already exceedingly successful and justly so; but those who dislike sentiment in strong doses (they are not numerous) should stay away.

"In Love with Love", Mr. Lawrence's other drama, is, at most points, a better play. The young lady, Ann Jordan by name, of this performance, is even more changeable than Lea Ellery of "Two Fellows and a Girl". Miss Jordan permits herself three changes of affection within the brief course of the play. She is, upon analysis, a weak, foolish, arbitrary, rather cloying young woman; but as played by Lynn Fontanne, the audience seems to feel sympathy for her. "In Love with Love" is further complicated by the presence of a cad villain, who messes things up at the end of the second act. It is hard to tell just how good Mr. Lawrence is when he is portraying foolish young people just being young and foolish, because the actors are not all so young, and some of them at moments a little too foolish. Parts of the first act I didn't believe at all. Men have hysterics; but not quite in Henry Hull's manner. He, as well as the other members of the cast, gave an able performance. "In Love with Love" is excellent entertainment, with several finely moving and true scenes. It will probably not be long before the works of Mr. Lawrence are published. Undoubtedly we shall have much of him during the next few seasons.

The resentment of encroaching parents is in the mode. Lewis Beach's "A Square Peg" gave us a grim touch of it last year. St. John Ervine's "The Ship", not yet produced in this country, is a skilful presentation of it. Paul Géraldy's "The Nest" dealt ably with it. Rachel Crothers has played with it. It is not often that dramatists have dared to invade the sanctity of American respect for motherhood. That is, indeed, a dangerous business. Yet there is no question that this mood has given us one of the finest few moments we shall any of us see this year, and, more's the pity, in an indifferent play. "Children of the Moon" by Martin Flavin is, for the first two acts, a powerful combination of mystery play and acute tragedy assisted rather cleverly by a fantastic if somewhat mechanical trick. The last act, which has since been altered, was as originally played unnecessary and unconvincing. An audience which practically cheered at the end of the second act left the theatre hushed and cold.

How many parents do you know who have ruined their children's lives?

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How many children do you know who have ruined their parents' lives? I have no generalizations as to the proportions; but in the theatre, at least, the wronged child is more of a novelty than the wronged parent. In this drama of twisted mother love we have the vagaries of the mad Athertons displayed. The most tragic figure is the mother, Laura Atherton, who drives her two children to madness and death by her jealous fears. The conflict between a tolerant, seeing grandmother (Henrietta Crosman) and the selfish, unseeing mother (Beatrice Terry) is tremendous. At its climax in the second act, it is superb. Whoever Martin Flavin is, he writes the English language. He is steeped in Greek tragedy, in Shakespeare, in Ibsen. His play preserves the unities. It moves with beauty and precision to the end of the second act. Beyond that, the playwright stumbles; but he has given us a thrill not often experienced in the theatre and a chance to see at least one superfine performance — that of Beatrice Terry as the mother — and several others only a degree less convincing.

Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson have written what may be termed a pleasant trifle called "Tweedles". Alexander Woollcott, the able critic of the New York "Herald", and others as able, have chosen to find this entertainment a sheer delight, so to speak; something better or as good as Tarkington's "Clarence", with shimmerings or shadows of Barrie humor and fancy. Here I confess myself deficient. While applauding the idea of "Tweedles", I must immediately admit that for great stretches of this gossamer-like drama I was thoroughly bored. This boredom is partly due to the fact that I am prejudiced against Tarkington young people in theatrical circles. In books they seem quite all right; back of the proscenium arch they seem like stumbling and disturbing morons. The young people of my acquaintance do not behave in this fashion at all, at all. They do not whine, stutter and stammer. They do not act shy as though they knew they were shy. In other words, while it is a legitimate stage trick, I dislike caricatures of young people displayed as the real thing.

Aside from the two main figures, the character drawing in "Tweedles" is good. The setting is Maine — Kennebunkport, I suppose — and the antique shop, with its ship models, is in the true Tarkington mood. The Tweedles family run the shop. Winsora Tweedles waits on table. Julian Castlebury, a youthful imbecile, falls in love with her. The conflict is between New England snobbery and the snobbery of down country wealth — the summer people versus the town folks. Now the town folks in this play seem real to me and the summer people don't; but, perhaps that's because I'm not a summer person. It was an excellent idea, this contrasting of snobs to show what fools snobs are. The climax of the third act is magnificent; but it does not palliate for me the great amount of adolescent posturing that surrounds the real moments. The dialogue is always engaging, but seldom brilliant.

Owen Davis's "Home Fires" proved disappointing. I had seen it in rehearsal and it had seemed skilful, poignant tragicomedy. As it is, the author of "Icebound" is occasionally at his best. If the production had been smoother, if the lines had not been flung at the audience with such stressful tones, the curious feeling of unreality which the whole play now gives might have been avoided. The

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story of a blundering, unsuccessful American husband — not good, not bad, just so so, a ten thousand dollar a year man — with children who want a motor car and a wife whose one ambition is to hold her home together, might have been fine. It might also have been funny. It is; but funny in a poster-like fashion. Deafness, after all, as I happen to know well, is a great infirmity. Have blind men ever been objects of ridicule on the stage? Why pick the deaf? Mr. Davis's children are real and amusing, as played by Morgan Farley and Lillian Ross. I prefer them to the Gregory Kelly-Tarkington variety. "Home Fires" fails to be real because it is forever becoming melodramatic. The last scene in the second act is too neat. The last act contains whole sections of moralistic dialogue. There are fine spots in the play, and it holds the interest. Many persons will enjoy it far better than they did "Icebound", but it does not belong in quite the same category.

"The Good Old Days" is the play with the bootlegger hero. It is German-American. Real, or very good imitation, beer flows over the counter in the first act, and one is forced to weep as the down and out bartender goes sobbing into the night clutching his bottle of whisky at the stroke of twelve ushering in the dawn of the eighteenth amendment. Alas! This play amused me. It seemed to amuse the audience. It is a thin story, becoming farce from time to time; but it is filled with excellent jokes of the vaudeville variety and very fine character acting. It will undoubtedly prove successful.

Of "We've Got to Have Money" one cannot be as sure. It is so crowded with plot, or rather plots, that it takes much George M. Cohan-like acting on the part of the strenuously youthful Robert Ames to hold the play together. The main idea, the financing of geniuses for the sake of their future development, is entertaining enough; but the several subplots annoy and do not add. The appearance of Flora Finch, the onetime movie partner of the late John Bunny, was a triumph. She is funny, even when she overacts.

"The Mad Honeymoon", which appeared briefly in town, was an old fashioned farce melodrama which proved neither especially original nor especially exciting. Here we are led to a discussion of the public reaction to melodrama. Already it is apparent that variants of "Nelly the Beautiful Cloak Model" and "East Lynne" are to be the theatregoer's portion this season. Last year it became evident that the thrill drama when played smartly would amuse, no matter how inconsistent it might be. This year, it appears that a real old fashioned melodrama, to please a New York audience, must *convince* as well as thrill. I believe this change in public attitude is due quite as much to the influence of the motion picture as to any other. Motion pictures, even at their most thrilling moments, are now as a rule fairly well documented. They must *seem real.* We are not prone to forgive palpable unrealities on the screen because we know it is a photograph. This has led us to a point where we are no longer able to forgive elaborate unreality on the stage. Of such are "The Mad Honeymoon" and "Thumbs Down", of such are parts of "The Breaking Point" and an occasional moment of "Red Light Annie". "The Woman on the Jury" is, perhaps, nearer drama than most plays of its type. It is excellently acted. "Red Light Annie", a crook drama which moves through brothel and uptown apartment with equal suavity and which gives Mary

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Ryan a chance to do a neat dope taking scene — several of them, in fact — held us spellbound. Our more discriminating neighbors, however, dubbed it extremely sentimental twaddle, though they did not deny the thrill of the last act. Mr. Forrest, as part author and director, has not failed in realistic details. His supper scene is steaming with real hot chicken and dumplings, and his hero eats with all the energy which we believe taxi drivers exhibit in eating. They probably eat much as we do, however.

The first act of "The Breaking Point", Mary Roberts Rinehart's own dramatization of her novel, is an expert condensation. It contains good character drawing. It sets the scene for an excellent play. The second act begins to seem unreal, with Gail Kane as Beverly Carlisle swirling impressively in and out; but its smashing climax has a genuine thrill. The last act dwindles away in sentimentality and a quick unraveling of plot threads, while McKay Morris, giving a superb performance, weeps real tears in the midst of the havoc. All in all, the performance has popular appeal, but it is a pity that the mood of the first act was not preserved throughout.

"Little Jessie James", a new variety of bedroom farce with music, seemed vastly entertaining to me. The music is good, Nan Halperin funny, the lyrics excellent, and the James Boys Band filled with enthusiastic and complicated jazzings. "Artists and Models", based on this year's Illustrators' Show, is designed to shock. It did and does. It was directed by the talented Harry Wagstaff Gribble, who wrote that clever comedy "March Hares". He wrote much of the book of this revue. Original at times, with lavish and bizarre scenery (Watson Barratt's Japanese print number is superb), it leads one to suspect that, if one does it in musical comedy, there is really very little that is shocking at which the New York public will not laugh. "Artists and Models" is, I hear, selling out. What does the public want?

OUTSTANDING MOTION PICTURES

1. THE COVERED WAGON: *Still remains the finest motion picture of years, with its story of love, bravery, and colonization.*

2. CIRCUS DAYS: *Jackie Coogan perfect as Toby Tyler who runs away to the circus where he meets success and his Waterloo. (Reviewed below.)*

3. LITTLE OLD NEW YORK: *Beautiful settings, thrills, and Marion Davies proving that she can really act. (Reviewed below.)*

4. THREE WISE FOOLS: *A good story combined with rare character acting makes this tale of youth and age one of the best of pictures for sheer enjoyment. (Reviewed below.)*

THERE have been more good motion pictures this month than there have been good plays, by a large percentage; and there are several excellent films that I have not seen. Among them is "The Green Goddess", featuring George Arliss and Alice Joyce. "Trilby", with a young French star, has good moments and is an adequate picturization of the novel; but

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it will disappoint many to whom the story and the play seemed more vivid and moving than does this new and curiously placid version.

I cannot say enough about "Circus Days". Here Jackie Coogan is as good as ever, and he is allowed to frisk through engaging and thrilling episodes without too great reliance upon sentiment. "Toby Tyler" by James Otis was a good yarn. The picture preserves, at least, the atmosphere of the book. Jackie rising from a puddle in a lonely road is a tragic figure. Jackie riding bareback in the circus is adept in antics of clowndom. Jackie with "Peaches" Jackson is a quite properly shy young lover. This is a picture that I believe children will enjoy more than most pictures of the Coogan variety, and parents no less.

Norma Talmadge in "Ashes of Vengeance" looks well against exquisite backgrounds. The picture is a story of love and sword play in the time of Catherine de Medici. There are exciting moments which spring from long stretches of boredom, and the theme of the picture seems to be consistently one of cruelty. The torture scene is carrying it a bit too far, I think.

"Little Old New York", the Marion Davies picture fashioned from the Rida Johnson Young play, is tasteful and beautiful throughout. It has been directed with great skill. Aside from the joy of seeing Robert Fulton, Washington Irving, Delmonico, John Jacob Astor, etc. move suavely in a rich setting of antique furniture, there is the even greater joy of a good story. The prize fight scene is a masterpiece of burlesquery. The fight as seen in the motions of the crowd is cleverly handled. In fact, all through "Little Old New York" crowds are managed in praiseworthy fashion.

"Drifting" has been deodorized for the screen. It remains a good melodrama. The behavior of the savages and some of Priscilla Dean's goings on are a bit hard to explain; but, on the whole, the picture is emotionally exciting.

The new James Cruze production, "Hollywood", tells all about the famous motion picture city, and why girls leave home to go there. It shows you your favorite screen star in action. It is a burlesque of the motion pictures. I think that it will amuse you, though it is a trifle long for a film of its character.

King Vidor directed "Three Wise Fools", and it is a fine piece of work. Austin Strong's play had in it excellent comedy and good melodrama. This has been strengthened in the motion picture, which seems to me better than the play. It is a story of three rich old men and a couple of young people, complicated by crooks in action. The characterization is almost perfect. If everyone who likes movies at all doesn't enjoy this picture, I shall be much surprised.

THE DRAMA SHELF

"His Majesty's Embassy" by Maurice Baring (Little, Brown). Brilliant literary plays by the author of "The Puppet Show of Memory".

"Comedies of Words" by Arthur Schnitzler (Stewart Kidd). Frank, short studies by the always keen and often highly pungent Austrian.

"Robert E. Lee" by John Drinkwater (Houghton Mifflin). A dignified and moving picture of the Civil War and the inspired leader of the Confederacy.

"The Secret Life" by Harley Granville-Barker (Little, Brown). Dull reading without the flashes of brilliance that mark other of his plays.

"The Love-Rogue" by Tirso de Molina (Lieber, Lewis). A spirited translation (by Harry Kemp) of a spirited play about Don Juan, marred for me by its use of rhymed couplets.

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OPENING THE NEW CHILDREN'S BOOKS

By Anne Carroll Moore

ORIGINALITY, personality, and variety in form distinguish so many of the books of the year as to indicate that authors, artists, and publishers are all seeking escape from the commonplace and the attenuated both in new titles and in new editions of old favorites.

Back to the alphabet with Charles B. Falls is an excellent rallying point, and we may well feel proud that an A B C book so admirable in design and in color printing has been produced on this side of the Atlantic. Mr. Falls designed the book for his little three year old daughter who likes "a big book with lots of pictures". The drawings are cut on wood blocks and printed from four-color plates, and the artist has personally superintended the reproduction of them. The highly decorative treatment accorded this group of animals and birds, freshly chosen from zoo and farm yard, has robbed no one of them of lifelike quality because of the simplicity and strength of line. The text is wisely limited to "E is for Elephant", "M is for Mouse" (a mouse, clinging to a full ear of wheat), "R is for Rooster" (a rooster of decided personality), "S is for Swan" (and a swan in a most lovely environment). The imagination of a child or grown up is left free to capture by its own thrill of recognition the familiar in a new-old medium where color has not obscured the outline nor played too many tricks with nature.

A selection from these drawings would form an admirable decorative frieze for a children's play room, a library bulletin board, or any school room where the alphabet is not taboo. The book will take its own place in the art departments of schools and libraries, but the fact that it was designed for a living child for whose mentality the artist had such evident respect stamps it first of all as a children's book which bids fair to exert a very considerable influence on American picture books.

It is high time we set about in earnest to produce American picture books of original character in distinctive form. Our own country needs them and other countries might even come to enjoy them as they now enjoy the best of our children's stories. As a creative influence upon the illustration and the writing of children's books in general they could not fail to exert a stimulating influence. Moreover, I am confident that picture books can be made to pay their way if they are strong enough in original conception and are reproduced in accordance with authentic artistic standards. To make them good enough calls for genius, a rich background, and a fresh outlook on the part of the artist — faith, and determination to set new standards for reproduction on the part of the publisher.

A notable instance of such faith and willingness led to an exact reproduction of William Nicholson's lithographs for "The Velveteen Rabbit". It will be good news to those who were unable to secure this delightful book

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in time for Christmas last year that it appears on the list of a leading American publisher for 1923.

Mr. Nicholson led the revival of printing from wood blocks about twenty-five years ago with "An Alphabet", "The Square Book of Animals", "An Almanac of Sports", and his character portraits — historical and legendary, notably his portrait of Queen Victoria. While none of his earlier work was done for children, the portraits were always, in my own experience, of great interest to boys and girls.

"Nursery Rhymes", with unforgetable drawings in black and white, and color, by Lovat Fraser, is another outstanding instance. It is the most widely and deservedly popular picture book that has been added to our library collections in many years. I have seen only two or three of Lovat Fraser's illustrations for "Peacock Pie", but I am prepared by those and by everything else I have seen from the hand of the distinguished artist of "The Beggar's Opera" to give this book a warm welcome.

There is a book after everyone's heart for the Christmas holidays this year, and I have amused myself by setting up a series of imaginary exhibitions of children's books extending from Maine to California, from Florida to Canada, as I have studied the new catalogues of the publishers or turned the leaves of dummies and advance copies of new books.

I should start every such exhibition with "The All Mother Goose Panorama", which is not a book at all, but a wall decoration for a child's room, a school room, or a library. Luxor Price designed this panorama in collaboration with his boy of four years, who told him just where to place everything. The work was a commission for another boy's room, and the child who gave it charm and character missed it so much that it was first photographed and finally reproduced in color under Mr. Price's direction. I have not yet seen the reproduction in color — even without color it is absolutely fascinating and a photograph of it under glass on a table at the Webster Branch of the New York Public Library has delighted the children of that neighborhood the past summer. Nothing at all like it has appeared within my remembrance. "The Mappe of Fairyland" is increasingly appreciated by older children and grown people; if not already known in a community it should be introduced at a holiday exhibition, with a full sense of its value in illuminating myths and legends, old songs and tales.

Kay Nielsen's illustrations for "East of the Sun and West of the Moon" were last year brought within reach of many libraries and schools by the publication of a cheaper edition. This book of old tales from the north, or "The Twelve Dancing Princesses", a book of well known and less known fairy tales, retold by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and illustrated by Kay Nielsen, will lend color and interest to any holiday exhibition.

Dulac's illustrations for Laurence Housman's "Stories from the Arabian Nights", Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's rendering of "The Sleeping Beauty and Other Fairy Tales from the Old French" and "Stories from Hans Andersen", also appear in cheaper editions. Arthur Rackham's illustrations for "Grimm's Fairy Tales" and "The Fairy Book" (the tales were selected by Edmund Gosse) appear in new editions with the imprint of new publishers. It should be realized and remembered that the work of these more sophisticated artists is not designed nor should

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it be recommended for the children of picture book age. For older boys and girls and for all grown people with any love of art, such illustrations renew and extend the early charm of familiar tales and keep them in sight and in mind through a stretch of adolescence and middle age that was colorless before they came.

The English version of the Queen of Rumania's "Naughty Kildene", with its lovely pictures by Job, is for the unusual child and her parents. It is a very clever, lively, and sophisticated story with an unmistakable moral. The book was first published in French and I am told that many American parents objected to the eagles in both pictures and story as "too frightening" for young children. So frequently has a similar objection been urged concerning the drawings of Arthur Rackham and other artists, that I would like to urge an even greater danger — that of the commonplace both in illustration and in text.

The remedy lies, I think, not in going without the book, but in looking deeper and further, choosing the right time and the right person for the presentation of it. Many children see ghosts and goblins and all kinds of things up to about seven years, when the illusions usually pass away. The artist retains this power.

Quiller-Couch has well said that if we limit children of the next generation to what we admire ourselves we pauperize their minds; this is no less true in the field of art than in that of literature.

Since this review is but a running commentary on a selection of outstanding books which may be suggested for holiday exhibitions, I may remind the reader that I place the most liberal construction possible upon the term "children" and include all ages falling there under the law. By his refusal to be tagged or too definitely prescribed for in life, in story, or in picture, the *ageless* child remains always in our midst to prove the exception to every list of books ever made for his benefit.

A book which has lighted up two holiday exhibitions in New York and which seems to be very little known elsewhere is an English translation of "Gargantua" made by Frederick S. Hoppin to accompany the delightful illustrations of the French edition. The pictures, both the black and white and the full page illustrations in color, are the work of Adrien Leroy, a French artist who was killed early in the war.

From "This Singing World"

Children like them very much and Mr. Hoppin's rendering of this extract from Rabelais is both innocuous and charming. The book is so reasonable in price and so decorative in appearance as to be suggested for even a

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small exhibition. The picture of Gargantua seeing Paris would alone justify selection of the book.

"This Singing World" sounds a new and refreshing note in anthologies for children. Louis Untermeyer's plan for the book is his own. He states it clearly in his introduction — which is a direct and very simple appeal to the reader to read wherever it pleases him in the book — and he affirms it in the titles he gives to the various sections.

Mr. Untermeyer has not made a book to please himself as poet and critic, nor has he brought together a miscellaneous collection of poetry and verse from other anthologies. He has gone straight to the field of modern poetry and verse with which he is thoroughly familiar. "Most of the poems in this book were written by living poets" — Mr. Untermeyer has made a liberal selection (the book includes about 350 titles), with allowance for the widely differing tastes of many readers concerning which he has taken the trouble to inform himself — "and so", he is able to say with truth, "it is *this* singing world — your world as well as theirs [the poets] that is between these covers." Such a live anthology with direct appeal to older boys and girls has long been needed in library reading rooms and school libraries. Florence Wyman Ivins's drawings, while turning it into a gift book of genuine value, have not blinded the publishers to the necessity of giving it a durable but very attractive outward form.

Helen Dean Fish has made a discriminating and interesting selection of poems in "The Boy's Book of Verse", for which Franklin K. Mathiews has written an introduction. Miss Fish has made a selection from poets of all time and has based it upon her own taste in poetry, confirmed by that of boys she has known and by the boys' schools with which she has been in touch while working upon the book over a period of some years. While I do not personally care to see poetry divided by sex, either in title or in selection, I have only commendation for the essential character and content of such a book as Mary Gould Davis's "The Girl's Book of Verse", to which Miss Fish's anthology appears as a companion volume. I realize that each of them will find its place in widening the circle of readers of poetry for its own sake.

I have not seen William Rose Benét's "Poems for Youth from American Literature", but I understand it is to appear in Everyman's Library. While designed for young people it is sure to be of general interest.

Winifred Bromhall's pictures for "A Child's Day" are introducing hundreds of children and their parents to the poetry of Walter de la Mare. The book is an ideal holiday gift and has fortunately been held at a reasonable price.

Those who liked Carl Sandburg's "Rootabaga Stories" and found in them something new and different than we have had in any book before, will go further and find still more in "Rootabaga Pigeons". Most of the stories in the second book were written before the first volume was published. As a matter of fact Carl Sandburg, who is the father of two little girls and an older one, has been writing these stories for some years, storing them away in a household crock of gold, which I trust will never be entirely empty — although I am told there will not be another volume of Rootabaga stories.

Those who did not like the first book will do well to read the second before forming a final opinion as to

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From "Rootabaga Pigeons"

the value of Carl Sandburg's contribution to American children's books. I feel sure that a definitive volume from the two books will eventually be made by the author, since the stories are unequal in content and form and some of them were manifestly not written for children. But for that matter, few of the books written directly for children survive a generation of readers and critics. Such stories as "Slipfoot", "Pig Wisps", "Deep Red Roses", "The Pigeons Who Sent the Telegrams", and others are bound to live because they are works of art. "A work of art can walk again", Hans Andersen tells us in his story of that marvelous clock that marched up the church aisle at a wedding and planted itself between bride and bridegroom after it had been smashed with an ax by the man who sought to do "the most incredible thing" in order to win the Princess for his bride — "the spirit of the work walked and that in deadly earnest." The spirit of genuine creative work will always walk in America no less surely than in distant and older countries. The Petershams have made some of their most delightful drawings for this book and it is given a very festive cover.

Many American readers are looking forward to Rose Fyleman's "Fairy Book", which is listed this year with two books of her verses, "The Fairy Green" and "The Fairy Flute", and a gay little book of stories called "The Rainbow Cat", all of which form inexpensive and attractive gift books. The "Fairy Book" is a more ambitious undertaking. It has not yet been available for examination.

There is very much of the same spirit that lies behind Rose Fyleman's verses, as well as of that she has caught from John Farrar's charming plays, in the illustrations Mary M. Ludlum has made for "The Magic Sea Shell". They are her own interpretations of the seven plays which make up this book rather than mere pictures for it, and I wish all readers of THE BOOKMAN might have seen their editor run across Murray Hill with his hands full of the original sketches to share his first pleasure in them. The plays are written to be given in garden, field or meadow, or indoors without formal preparation, and the book's essential atmosphere is: "It's such fun to give a play!"

"Three to Make Ready" contains three plays by Louise Ayres Garnett which can be given by children with comparatively little preparation. This book has already been tested by the children, who like it very much. There are hopeful signs of more and better books of plays for children.

In "The Starlight Wonder Book" Henry B. Beston has dipped his pen in a well of pure English to write another book of his romantic out of door tales. I heard him read "The Man of the Wild Wood" and "The Brave Grenadiers" in the woods at Peterborough a year ago and they seemed to me even better than the stories of "The Firelight Fairy Book". Such titles as "The Bell of the Earth and the Bell of the Sea" and "The Wood Beyond the World" suggest that these stories are of the type of "The City Under the

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Sea" of the earlier volume. Maurice Day has illustrated the book in black and white with a colored frontispiece, and it is issued in a less expensive and more durable form than was given the first edition of "The Firelight Fairy Book", which has recently acquired a more practical cover and has also been issued in a cheaper edition to meet the popular demand by schools and libraries.

A book after Mr. Beston's own heart, since he is an avowed sea rover, is Captain Bone's "Lookoutman". Every type of ship is described in this book with a simplicity and clarity that leave one free to enjoy the pictures which illustrate it. H. Hudson Rodwell is the artist and he did the work under Captain Bone's supervision. Great ships, mail liners, cargo liners, coasters and traders, tugs and port service vessels all live for anyone with a trace of seagoing blood in his veins. This book will delight boys, who will quickly turn to its glossary of sea terms.

"A Traveler's Letters to Boys and Girls" is gay without and pure gold within. Caroline M. Hewins, who wrote these letters from Florence, from London, from Edinburgh, from Algiers, to actual boys and girls with whom she wanted to share the pleasure of her own holiday, is a born traveler with a true love of art and a sure knowledge of literary and historical associations. Miss Hewins has made a distinctive contribution to an undeveloped field of children's books and her publishers have wisely refrained from disguising the book under a makeup title. The illustrations have been carefully chosen to reinforce the text, and the decorative map and gay end papers make it a most attractive book for exhibition or gift to a prospective traveler.

"The Wizard of the North" is an admirable piece of work, the strongest of Parker Fillmore's free renderings, in my judgment. Jay Van Everen has made the drawings for these stories from the Kalevala, which so abound in pictorial suggestion that he could have made many more, he says. I have as yet seen only the frontispiece of the book. Mr. Van Everen's pictures for "Nicholas, a Manhattan Christmas Story" are entirely different from any other work he has done, since the subject called for action, simplicity, and a rediscovery of actual New York as well as for pictorial imagination. His colored frontispiece carries the very spirit and essence of Christmas in a new way and his pictorial map of Manhattan, which appears as end papers to the book, and also in a separate wrapper at a nominal price, is unique. The full page

From "Nicholas"

drawings and the head and tail pieces for the book are authentic in their representation of things actual and historic, and amusing in the portrayal of the imaginative. The story is a true story of Nicholas, a strange

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Dutch boy, written for the *ageless* child living anywhere. Nicholas is of the race of Knickerbockers and his publishers are giving him the best of typography and a festive cover jacket.

An advance copy of "Franconia Stories", edited by Margaret Armstrong, sent me straight to the ten little red volumes as Jacob Abbott wrote them in the 1850's, to find that Miss Armstrong had treated her text with respect and genuine affection. The first three chapters of her book are taken from "Malleville" and the remaining chapters are from "Wallace" and other volumes of this fascinating series. While I can ill spare some of the charming bits Miss Armstrong has eliminated from her text — not a word the inimitable Beechnut said should ever be lost, nor a single explicit direction of Jacob Abbott himself — I welcome the new and attractive form of the stories for the children of today. The pictures may be described as pleasantly reminiscent of the period and the book should introduce another generation to Jacob Abbott whose best creative work for children is to be found in "Franconia Stories".

"The Spirit of the Leader" shows that William Heyliger has traveled far and intimately with boys of high school age since his first "High Benton". His natural ready companionship and intuitive grasp of boy psychology have gained depth and variety by repeated contacts with groups of older boys in different sections of the country, and the story is lifted out of what might have been mere theoretical propaganda by its characterization, its terse dramatic style, and a strain of pure idealism. American citizenship is brought home to boys and girls in terms of their own daily experience, at a time when the influence of such a story will be widely felt.

A little book which seems made for Hallowe'en in its orange cover with a decoration of black cats is "The Black Cats and the Tinker's Wife" by Margaret Baker, illustrated with quite the most lively and delightful silhouettes I have ever seen. The story has the quality of a folk tale, with equal appeal to children or grown people. This book is being published simultaneously in London and New York.

Edith Rickert's "Bojabi Tree", illustrated by the Russian artist Gleb Botkin, is another little book with double appeal and well worth a more discriminating appreciation.

Several books illustrated by well known artists have not been available for examination. Frank C. Papé has finished the pictures for Padraic Colum's fine rendering of "The Arabian Nights", which was announced for publication in 1922, and he has also illustrated Dean Hodges's "When the King Comes".

Willy Pogany is making the drawings for "Haroun El Raschid", the third volume in Frances Jenkins Olcott's selections from "Arabian Nights" stories. Louis Rhead has illustrated an edition of "King Arthur and His Knights", edited by Sir James Knowles, which appears in the series of classics illustrated by this artist. Frank Schoonover's pictures for Kirk Munroe's "Flamingo Feather" give this fine story a new lease of life. "Quentin Durward" appears in a distinguished holiday series with illustrations in color by C. B. Chambers.

Nancy Barnhart's pictures for Kenneth Grahame's "The Wind in the Willows" I have seen in the English edition. They are charming and are much liked by the author I understand. The name of the Czech artist

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who illustrated Mrs. John Mokrejs's translation of "Beyond the Giant Mountains" is not given. Mrs. Mokrejs has been at work upon this book for several years and it should be a valuable addition to the Czech folk tales.

Lucy Fitch Perkins's "Robin Hood" has been reissued, and Mrs. Perkins adds "The Filipino Twins" to her popular stories of children of other countries. There is a new holiday edition of Charlotte Yonge's "Little Duke" with illustrations in color. Sarah Orne Jewett's "Betty Leicester", Abbie Farwell Brown's "John of the Woods", Flora Shaw's "Castle Blair" and a full score of other titles have put on new dresses. Ten volumes of the "Harper's Young People Series" have been newly set up in better type. "The Riverside Bookshelf" is launched with eight illustrated volumes to which others will be added. And "The Walter Crane Picture Books" are once more available at a moderate price, bound up in six volumes.

A B C Book. By C. B. Falls. Doubleday, Page and Co.

The Velveteen Rabbit. By Margery Williams. Illustrated by William Nicholson. George H. Doran Company. London: William Heinemann.

Nursery Rhymes. Illustrated by Claud Lovat Fraser. Alfred A. Knopf. London: T. C. and E. C. Jack.

Peacock Pie. By Walter de la Mare. Illustrated by Claud Lovat Fraser. Henry Holt and Co. London: Constable and Co.

The All Mother Goose Panorama. By Luxor Price. Frederick A. Stokes Co.

The Mappe of Fairyland. By Bernard Sleigh. E. P. Dutton and Co. London: Sidgwick and Jackson.

East of the Sun and West of the Moon. Illustrated by Kay Nielsen. George H. Doran Company.

The Twelve Dancing Princesses. Retold by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. Illustrated by Kay Nielsen. George H. Doran Company.

Stories from The Arabian Nights. Retold by Laurence Housman. Illustrated by Edmund Dulac. George H. Doran Company.

The Sleeping Beauty and Other Fairy Tales from the Old French. Retold by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. Illustrated by Edmund Dulac. George H. Doran Company.

Stories from Hans Andersen. Illustrated by Edmund Dulac. George H. Doran Company.

Fairy Tales. By the Brothers Grimm. Illustrated by Arthur Rackham. Doubleday, Page and Co.

The Fairy Book. Selected by Edmund Gosse. Illustrated by Arthur Rackham. Doubleday, Page and Co.

Naughty Kildene. By the Queen of Rumania. Illustrated by Job. Harcourt, Brace and Co.

Gargantua. Translated by Frederick S. Hoppin. Illustrated by Adrien Leroy. Duffield and Co.

This Singing World. Chosen by Louis Untermeyer. Illustrated by Florence Wyman Ivins. Harcourt, Brace and Co.

The Boy's Book of Verse. Compiled by Helen Dean Fish. Frederick A. Stokes Co.

The Girl's Book of Verse. Compiled by Mary Gould Davis. Frederick A. Stokes Co.

Poems for Youth from American Literature. Edited by William Rose Benét. E. P. Dutton and Co.

A Child's Day. By Walter de la Mare. Illustrated by Winifred Bromhall. Henry Holt and Co.

Rootabaga Pigeons. By Carl Sandburg. Illustrated by Maud and Miska Petersham. Harcourt, Brace and Co.

The Fairy Flute. By Rose Fyleman. George H. Doran Company.

The Fairy Queen. By Rose Fyleman. George H. Doran Company.

The Rainbow Cat. By Rose Fyleman. George H. Doran Company.

The Magic Sea Shell. By John Farrar. Illustrated by Mary M. Ludlum. George H. Doran Company.

Three to Make Ready. By Louise Ayres Garnett. George H. Doran Company.

The Starlight Wonder Book. By Henry B. Beston. Illustrated by Maurice Day. The Atlantic Monthly Press.

The Firelight Fairy Book. By Henry B. Beston. The Atlantic Monthly Press.

The Lookoutman. By David W. Bone. Illustrated by H. Hudson Rodwell. Harcourt, Brace and Co.

A Traveler's Letters to Boys and Girls. By Caroline M. Hewins. The Macmillan Co.

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The Wizard of the North. By Parker Fillmore. Illustrated by Jay Van Everen. Harcourt, Brace and Co.

Nicholas, A Manhattan Christmas Story. By Anne Carroll Moore. Illustrated by Jay Van Everen. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Franconia Stories. By Jacob Abbott. Edited by Margaret Armstrong. Illustrated by Helen Maitland Armstrong. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The Spirit of the Leader. By William Heyliger. D. Appleton and Co.

The Black Cats and the Tinker's Wife. By Margaret Baker. With silhouettes by Mary Baker. Duffield and Co. London: Grant Richards.

The Bojabi Tree. By Edith Rickert. Illustrated by Gleb Botkin. Doubleday, Page and Co.

Stories from The Arabian Nights. Selected by Padraic Colum. Illustrated by Frank C. Papé. The Macmillan Co.

When the King Comes. By George Hodges. Illustrated by Frank C. Papé. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Haroun El Raschid. Edited by Frances Jenkins Olcott. Illustrated by Willy Pogany. Henry Holt and Co.

King Arthur and his Knights. Edited by Sir James Knowles. Illustrated by Louis Rhead. Harper and Bros.

The Flamingo Feather. By Kirk Munroe. Illustrated by Frank Schoonover. Harper and Bros.

Quentin Durward. By Sir Walter Scott. Illustrated by C. B. Chambers. Charles Scribner's Sons.

The Wind in the Willows. By Kenneth Grahame. Illustrated by Nancy Barnhart. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Beyond the Giant Mountains. By Adolph Wenig. Translated by Mrs. John Mokrejs. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Robin Hood. Selected and illustrated by Lucy Fitch Perkins. Houghton Mifflin Co.

The Filipino Twins. By Lucy Fitch Perkins. Houghton Mifflin Co.

The Little Duke. By Charlotte M. Yonge. Illustrated by Beatrice Stevens. Duffield and Co.

Betty Leicester. By Sarah Orne Jewett. Houghton Mifflin Co.

John of the Woods. By Abbie Farwell Brown. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Castle Blair. By Flora Shaw. Little, Brown and Co.

Harper's Young People Series. Harper and Bros.

The Riverside Bookshelf. Houghton Mifflin Co.

The Walter Crane Picture Books. Dodd, Mead and Co.

From "Rootabaga Pigeons"

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THE BOOKMAN'S GUIDE TO FICTION

THE BOOKMAN *will present each month tabloid reviews of a selected list of recent fiction. This section will include also the books most in demand according to the current reports in "Books of the Month", compiled by the R. R. Bowker Company, The Baker and Taylor Company's "Monthly Book Bulletin", and* "THE BOOKMAN'S *Monthly Score". Such books as the editor especially recommends are marked with a star.*

GREY TOWERS—Anonymous—*Covici-McGee.* This sordid exposé, through the medium of an idealistic and reforming young lady, is, like "Main Street", onesided. The faculty of the University of Chicago are the victims.

WEST OF THE WATER TOWER—Anonymous—*Harper.* A sort of American "Cathedral" with expert characterization overcoming faults of prosaic writing.

*BLACK OXEN—Gertrude Atherton—*Boni, Liveright.* How an elderly lady finds youth, and the rather complicated uses to which she puts it.

THE SCUDDERS—Irving Bacheller—*Macmillan.* Another debate about the younger generation, more violent than some.

THE DIM LANTERN — Temple Bailey — *Penn.* Absolutely nothing to offend in this sweet story of lovers and loving and the smaller problems of their loves.

*JEAN HUGUENOT—Stephen Vincent Benét—*Holt.* A sympathetic and exquisitely written study of an unruly young southern girl, her break with tradition, and her broken life. *(See page 201.)*

THE PAROWAN BONANZA—B. M. Bower—*Little, Brown.* This gold mine story has many flashes of the humor that brightened "Casey Ryan".

MIDWINTER—John Buchan—*Doran.* Historical romance with Dr. Samuel Johnson as a character and an ending above the ordinary. But who *was* Amos Midwinter?

*RAW MATERIAL—Dorothy Canfield—*Harcourt, Brace.* Character studies of a high degree of excellence. Truth with all the charm of fiction. *(See page 201.)*

*A LOST LADY—Willa Cather—*Knopf.* Marian Forrester is a character worthy of Henry James and should rank as Miss Cather's finest creation. *(See page 200.)*

*ONE OF OURS — Willa Cather — *Knopf.* An uneven study of young manhood and the Great War.

THE LUNATIC AT LARGE AGAIN—J. Storer Clouston—*Dutton.* A charmingly reckless farce comedy filled with amusing complications.

CASTLE CONQUER—Padraic Colum—*Macmillan.* A pastoral that will be read with quiet enjoyment by those who have been a part of the intimate life of Ireland. Outsiders will find it too much of a family affair.

THE LUCK OF THE KID—Ridgwell Cullum—*Putnam.* This reads like a movie—all about murderers and lost gold mines in the Arctic and lovers.

LONELY FURROW—Maud Diver—*Houghton Mifflin.* The story of a difficult marriage worked out against the background of India.

*THE ENCHANTED APRIL—"Elizabeth"—*Doubleday, Page.* An escape novel—in which the escaping ladies find much amusement and romance in a rented castle which is in sunny Italy, not Spain.

FLAMING YOUTH—Warner Fabian—*Boni, Liveright.* A frank study of the young ladies who substitute desperate modernism for ethical standards.

THE TRAIL OF THE ELK—M. Fönhus—*Century.* A simply written story of a Norwegian hunter's pursuit of an elk supposed to be animated by a dead man's soul.

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN—Henry James Forman—*Little, Brown.* Young Brandon

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ships before the mast for adventure and settles into stodgy prosperity on a South Sea island.

HOLIDAY—Waldo Frank—*Boni, Liveright.* A southern negro, portrayed with a mystical insight and beauty which is fairly astonishing, ends up with a rope about his neck and flames at his feet. Superb writing in spots.

*FAINT PERFUME—Zona Gale—*Appleton.* Very pale in comparison with the expert characterization is the highly idealistic love story which closes this combination of small town novel and sentimental romance.

THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD—Philip Gibbs—*Doran.* Human problems cleverly mixed with a fine study of present day internationalism, of Europe's attempted reconstruction.

INVISIBLE WINGS — Mary Geary Grant — *Moffat, Yard.* Déclassé New York society cannot enervate the goodness, beauty, and intelligence of Dory O'Moore, who finds her rainbow's end in "passionate maternity".

WANDERER OF THE WASTELAND — Zane Grey—*Harper.* The Wanderer loses his soul only to find it in the Wasteland which is peopled with the usual banditti.

PIRATE TALES FROM THE LAW—Arthur M. Harris—*Little, Brown.* Court records of the trials of Captain Kidd and others, brimful of adventure.

THE FLORENTINE DAGGER—Ben Hecht—*Boni, Liveright.* A descendant of the Italian Renaissance dominates a mystery tale, after the manner of the Chicago Renaissance.

TOMORROW ABOUT THIS TIME — Grace Livingston Hill—*Lippincott.* A man who doesn't want children—and why the author thinks he should.

*THE COVERED WAGON—Emerson Hough—*Appleton.* The story of pioneer days that has served as the background for the greatest motion picture of our time.

*NORTH OF 36—Emerson Hough—*Appleton.* Another story of colonization. More exciting than "The Covered Wagon".

WITHIN THESE WALLS—Rupert Hughes—*Harper.* All about a family skeleton, the Croton dam, and an unruly lady.

THE TEMPTRESS—Vicente Blasco Ibáñez—*Dutton.* A keen analysis of the working of a woman's pernicious influence.

BLINDFOLD—Orrick Johns—*Lieber, Lewis.* An unusual situation delicately and cleverly handled.

SIMON CALLED PETER—Robert Keable—*Dutton.* The old story of religion versus sex—a young minister succumbs to the loose morality of wartime.

HEART'S BLOOD — Ethel M. Kelley — *Knopf.* A sincere and realistic portrait of Cape Cod folks. Told simply and with the power to move.

*BABBITT — Sinclair Lewis — *Harcourt, Brace.* The middle class American business man becomes the negative hero of a slashing satire on the Rotary Club spirit.

UNDER A THOUSAND EYES — Florence Bingham Livingston — *Cosmopolitan.* A small town novel in which the heroine who comes back is not so critical as Carol Kennicott.

THE SENTRY—Nicolai Lyeskov—*Knopf.* True to the Russian manner yet with plot more clearly developed, these stories make better than average reading.

THE BACHELOR GIRL (La Garçonne)—Victor Margueritte—*Knopf.* Mademoiselle casts off her faithless fiancé and proceeds to sow wild oats—until she meets the right man. A slightly expurgated translation, apparently.

THE LAND OF FORGOTTEN MEN—Edison Marshall—*Little, Brown.* An island in the chilly Behring Sea presents a unique state of affairs, and calls forth the author's ingenuity.

THE WINDING STAIR—A. E. W. Mason—*Doran.* An adventure story that cuts rather deeply into the motives of human action.

*THE DAY'S JOURNEY—W. B. Maxwell—*Doubleday, Page.* A man's friendship for a man which persists through a troubled lifetime.

OLIVER OCTOBER—George Barr McCutcheon—*Dodd, Mead.* A slow start but a Garrison finish to this tale of a man on trial for his life.

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MR. AND MRS. SEN—Louise Jordan Miln—*Stokes.* Another mixed marriage—white and yellow—with absorbing if difficult results.

THE SEVEN HILLS—Meade Minnigerode—*Putnam.* Old New Englanders sit on their hills until the Barbarian (an Italian, no less) comes along and topples them off. That is the background for a love story.

DEEP CHANNEL—Margaret Prescott Montague—*Atlantic.* The creative power of mutual devotion wins spiritual release for a harried little husband and a drab little spinster.

*WHERE THE BLUE BEGINS—Christopher Morley—*Doubleday, Page.* Thoroughly charming writing. The best of Morley's books, this gentle satire on domesticity.

SWEET PEPPER—Geoffrey Moss—*Dutton.* A nice girl becomes not so nice in Budapest, but in the final instance again resorts to nicety.

*BREAD—Charles G. Norris—*Dutton.* Is love or business more important to the modern girl? Accurate and moving portrayal of a typical young American business woman. *(See page 200.)*

THE MYSTERY ROAD—E. Phillips Oppenheim—*Little, Brown.* A very pure young man let loose on the continent, being most active in Russia. Good fast moving yarn.

THE VISION OF DESIRE—Margaret Pedler—*Doran.* A misogynist is sugar cured in the pages of this harmless tale.

THE LATE MATTIA PASCAL—Luigi Pirandello—*Dutton.* There is gaiety and much piquant foolery in this wag Pascal, who simply won't stay dead.

THE WHITE FLAG—Gene Stratton-Porter—*Doubleday, Page.* The machinations of a wicked banker almost overwhelm a lovely girl but virtue prevails. There is even a mortgage.

RANDOLPH MASON: CORRECTOR OF DESTINIES—Melville Davisson Post—*Putnam.* Again we meet the clever lawyer using the loopholes in the law to correct injustice.

STELLA DALLAS—Olive Higgins Prouty—*Houghton Mifflin.* Class distinction as typified by a mixed marriage, and the child of the union love for whom urges the mother to make a supreme sacrifice.

IRONHEART—William MacLeod Raine—*Houghton Mifflin.* Another term for red blood—another story of a soul reborn. Tug Jones is a picturesque figure.

THE MADONNA OF THE SLATE—Laban Lacy Rice—*Baird-Ward.* Eight stories, some grave, some gay, one very good, some much less so.

THE UNGROWN-UPS—"Rita"—*Putnam.* A Young Girl's War Diary, far more concerned with the goings on of the English flapper than with her soldier boy.

FORTUNE'S FOOL—Rafael Sabatini—*Houghton Mifflin.* Honor lost and won again by the handsome adventurer Colonel Holles, late of Cromwell's army. Restoration London the background of an exciting and colorful romance.

THE SEA-HAWK—Rafael Sabatini—*Houghton Mifflin.* Barbary Corsairs in the days of Queen Elizabeth give this zestful author chance for the glint of sword play and the smell of gunpowder.

GREY WETHERS—V. Sackville-West—*Doran.* Less substantial than the author's "Challenge" but quite as evidently the work of a literary artist.

RACE—A. L. Samms—*Covici-McGee.* The dashing Kentuckian of fiction has to have peccadillos in order to have dash; and it is the account of these peccadillos which makes "Race".

WHATEVER GODS—Maurice Samuel—*Duffield.* A clever satire on efficiency sharks has for its setting a realistic rubber tire factory, and for its plot an idealistic love story.

ESCAPADE—Evelyn Scott—*Seltzer.* An autobiographic, vivid, and sordid story of a young woman who runs away to South America with another's husband. She details sanitary conditions which are apparently very trying.

BRASS COMMANDMENTS—Charles Alden Seltzer—*Century.* Another volley from a six-gun—with every shot a bull's eye.

CHILDREN OF THE WIND—M. P. Shiel—*Knopf.* Mid-African adventure, Rider Haggard model, rebuilt with up to date accessories.

THE BACK SEAT—G. B. Stern—*Knopf.* The sparkles and scintillations of much

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clever dialogue set off the story of the famous actress who is persuaded to take a back seat and let her daughter play the part written for her.

PONJOLA — Cynthia Stockley — *Putnam.* Trousers become the heroine in Africa when they drink the title.

MR. PODD—Freeman Tilden—*Macmillan.* A satire on those who would set up governments of their own—Mr. Podd does, and his island Utopia is engagingly impossible.

HIS CHILDREN'S CHILDREN—Arthur Train —*Scribner.* A sensational study of the interplay of generations and of New York society.

ADVENTURING—Tristram Tupper—*Doran.* A very long short story in which the author rashly gives the mare Romance her head with the result that she almost throws him.

FEET OF CLAY—Margaretta Tuttle—*Little, Brown.* A dramatic story of young love, marriage, disillusionment, and self-sacrifice. Competent and thoroughly popular. *(See page 202.)*

EFFICIENCY IN HADES—Robert B. Vale—*Stokes.* Full of quaint conceits and devilish ingenuity, but on the whole rather dull.

THE BLIND BOW-BOY—Carl Van Vechten —*Knopf.* An amusing and a shocking trifle. Might have been called, "How to educate your boy to be thoroughly bad." *(See page 202.)*

*THE CATHEDRAL—Hugh Walpole—*Doran.* A study of English town life, of too great ambition, and of gossiping tongues.

MEN LIKE GODS—H. G. Wells—*Macmillan.* Mr. Wells again cosmic in his imagining of what we may all be like in the far distant future.

*A SON AT THE FRONT—Edith Wharton—*Scribner.* A study of what a fine young man's sacrifice does to the friends who surround him. Expert picture of the social fabric of wartime. *(See page 202.)*

THE EXILE OF THE LARIAT—Honoré Willsie—*Stokes.* A regular Joseph's coat: love, women in politics, dinosaurs, aeroplanes, irrigation crooks, blizzards, and canyon scenery, all neatly interwoven.

THE MINE WITH THE IRON DOOR—Harold Bell Wright—*Appleton.* A good man, a pure girl, and some Arizona bad men struggle toward gold, happiness, and poetic justice through abduction, murder, escapes, alarms and excursions. Old stuff, but it leads to the Delectable Mountains.

A MEDITERRANEAN MYSTERY—Fred E. Wynne — *Duffield.* A quaint tale of smuggling, murder, and desert wandering without a word of love, told by a clergyman.

THE POEMS OF THE MONTH

Selected by Genevieve Taggard

THERE is much to say about Louise Bogan's "Chanson un peu naïve" in "Vanity Fair" for July, but that much is of interest to craftsmen only. Trying to analyze a good poem is like banging one's head against a crystal stone wall; you see but you do not penetrate. And still, if you are a craftsman, you cannot stop trying. How beautiful the first four lines of this lyric are! And do you know why? No, nor I; but I suspect that a nice balance between the rise and fall of common speech, and the movement of the strict stanza, contribute part of the quality.

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There are other reasons, enough to go around, and for the swift lines that follow. But such talk clutters up things, before reading the poem itself.

CHANSON UN PEU NAIVE

What body can be ploughed,
Sown, and broken yearly?
She would not die, she vowed,
But she has nearly.
Sing, heart, sing;
Call and carol clearly.

And since she could not die,
Care would be a feather,
A film over the eye
Of two that lie together.
Fly, song, fly,
Break your little tether.

So from strength concealed
She makes her pretty boast:
Pain is a furrow healed
And she may love you most.
Cry, song, cry,
And hear your crying lost.

Louise Bogan
—*Vanity Fair*

Nothing else this month has such style. But Kenneth Slade Alling's "The Bird" and "Ferns" in "The Measure", Elizabeth Coatsworth's "Saint John" in "Rhythmus", and William Rose Benét's "Primum Mobile" in "The New Republic" for July 18 interest me next. I like Alling's sound combinations; he has subtle knowledge of the music to be played on vowels and consonants. I quote "The Bird":

THE BIRD

The serpent knows
The oldest trade,
Oh bird seduced,
Brightly afraid;
Watching the glints
In the snake's eyes,
Dark promises
Of paradise;
Watching and waiting and at length
Dissolved in the snake's strength.

Kenneth Slade Alling
—*The Measure*

"Saint John" is a rugged poem with a closing line to each stanza that is especially rugged to the point of being ragged. All this goes well with the shaggy saint. The poem is more interesting than perfect, with bits like "the fierce small bees" and the couplet

Shrilling great outrageous things
In the angry ears of kings . . .

How interesting, too, this ending, with all three people in the poem at the fever pitch of excitement: the saint shrilling from the desert, the king angry, and the princess "hot with dancing".

SAINT JOHN

A wild pleasure for Saint John
In the desert wandering
Under red cliffs pondering
Shaggy-headed facing dawn
Stooping to lost pools to drink
Meditating by their brink
Stripping fruit from desert trees
Stealing honey from the fierce small bees . . .

A wild pleasure for Saint John,
Visionary swift and thin
Wrapped about by a goat's skin
(Nothing man had worked or woman
Woven) like a hairy beast
Curled in a beast's cave to rest
Dreaming with a saint's elation
Of the terrible and lonely pathway to salvation . . .

A wild pleasure for Saint John
In a blinding recognition
To have known his Lord and mission
From the desert to have gone
Shrilling great outrageous things
In the angry ears of kings
Till that head from desert sands
A princess hot with dancing carried between her hands.

Elizabeth J. Coatsworth
—*Rhythmus*

Mr. Benét's poem, though not quite, is almost spoiled for me by its clichés such as "dark and dim", "golden glooms and dun", and "sudden stars", "wildly bright". But then there are lines like

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Vast and oceanic flame . . .

And the end quickens with a real pang. Another thing troubles me, however. Is my ear fussy and academic? I am doubtful as to the effectiveness of rhyming words that suddenly jump out of the line where they don't belong, and jerk it into an impossible rhythm. I was told so fiercely about these rhyming words years ago by Leonard Bacon when he was commenting on a poem of my own!

PRIMUM MOBILE

Prismy shafts as clear as glass
Climb through golden glooms and dun.
Struck athwart them, sunbeams pass,
Black though tempest hide the sun.
Down a vivid blue crevasse
Sudden stars are wildly bright.
Rondured like a dome of brass
Light deceives from height to height.

Hissing serpentines of rain,
Streaming storms of hail are hurled,
Swirled and sown abroad like grain
Here, above the whirling world;
Vast and vague, as in a brain
Quick with all the pricks of sense,
Clouds of ever-changing stain
Coil and drift to confluence.

Ghostly spawn of vortices,
Spinning deeply dark and dim, —
Phantoms known as flowers and trees,
Seas where glittering fishes swim,
Rooms — like these — where sit and talk
Beings of most curious grace,
Streets where hurrying shadows walk, —
Somehow, then, emerged from Space!

All this world of Me and You,
Each preëminent event,
Twinkles like a spark of dew —
Nucleus of the firmament.
Vast and oceanic flame
Fades before one beam of eyes.
Sound of a familiar name
Echoing fills enormous skies.

Place your hand upon my heart
Lest some shattering blast be blown,
Lest these four walls flash apart
And infinity its own
Claim in flame.
Yet, as your face
Turns to meet my inmost dreams, —
There was — something — Outer Space —
How preposterous it seems!

William Rose Benét
—*The New Republic*

Now, alas, although I cherish them as poets, William H. Davies and Hazel Hall seem not quite themselves in their verse published in "The New Republic" this month. And so with a backward glance, wondering if I can be wrong, I go on to Leonora Speyer's "New Excavations", one of her "Pompeian Quatrains" in the July 21 issue of "The Literary Review":

NEW EXCAVATIONS

A workman with his spade in half a day
Can push two thousand lagging years away;
See, how the tragic villas, one by one,
Like sleepy lizards, creep into the sun.

Leonora Speyer
—*The Literary Review*

Grace Fallow Norton's "The Miller's Youngest Daughter", from "Poetry", is unfortunately too long for quotation here.

Bernard Raymund's "After Plenty" turns up in a second reading of "The Measure". And then quite suddenly in "The Liberator", comes this terse statement:

THE TERRIBLE DEAD

We pity; we should dread
The terrible dead.
These things of flesh and bones
Ascend now to their thrones!
From whence they judge, unjustly, all we do.
We have no law but what they thought and knew,
Wished and preferred, deemed evil and deemed true.
We are free or prisoned, as their word is said.
We pity; we should dread
The terrible dead . . .

Mary Carolyn Davies
—*The Liberator*

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THE EDITOR RECOMMENDS—

THIS month I am reviewing seven books of fiction. Each of them is good in one way or another. I should recommend them to your attention in the following order: "A Lost Lady" by Willa Cather (Knopf), "Bread" by Charles G. Norris (Dutton), "Jean Huguenot" by Stephen Vincent Benét (Holt), "Raw Material" by Dorothy Canfield (Harcourt, Brace), "A Son at the Front" by Edith Wharton (Scribner), "Feet of Clay" by Margaretta Tuttle (Little, Brown), and "The Blind Bow-Boy" by Carl Van Vechten (Knopf).

A Triumphant Character

THIS portrait of a lady by Willa Cather is as brilliant as a summer dawn, as clear, as beautiful. I suppose "A Lost Lady" can hardly be called a novel, yet it is more than a novelette — we might let it go at, a short novel. Marian Forrester, wife of Captain Forrester, railroad magnate in the days of western railroad building, is a terrifying figure. Thoroughly lovable, vain, capricious, daring — Miss Cather has used her as a pivotal point around which to swing the characters of several types of men. They are brutal portraits in a way, quick, incisive, arresting. Miss Cather does not pause for morbid detail. Her sadistic Ivy Peters is a masterpiece of quick characterization. Captain Forrester, bluff, good humored, tolerant, sad; in all the true meaning of chivalric codes, a gentleman. Neil, the young dreamer, to whom Marian is a symbol of womanly love, whose disillusion is heartrending but who works through to a real admiration of the brilliant Mrs. Forrester. Francis Ellinger, the Don Juan, arrogant, thoughtless, bold. Quite simply, without elaborate machinery, Miss Cather has drawn her allegorical presentation of love in its various phases. It is portrayed from the masculine point of view, yet by a woman who has seen her men characters and understands them. The method, while it will remind you of Henry James, is more lucid. This is a fine piece of psychological writing. I can think of nothing of its kind so good in recent American fiction, with the possible exception of "Ethan Frome".

This Freedom Again

THE problem of woman's business ambitions as contrasted with those of home making has been handled in recent fiction often enough, usually badly. Charles Norris has used it as the basis for a really first rate novel in "Bread". He does not bother himself with the results of mother neglect on the children. He attacks the problem at its root. What is it that the woman in business really wants? Jeannette Sturgis is, like Miss Cather's Marian Forrester, a true portrait — her struggle with respectable poverty, her job, her love affairs, her tragic facing of life at the end of the book. Mr. Norris is a preacher, but he points his meaning with character, not with cant. Here is a story without bitter-

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ness, without the prevailing note of satire. It is firm, simple, direct. Perhaps the portrait of Chandler B. Corey, the publisher, will not seem so fine to those who are not closely connected with the book trade; but as a portrait of an American business man, it is a relief, after all the ill considered burlesques and ironical delineations of recent years. Surely, those reviewers who maintain so loudly that Mr. Norris is a good novelist but writes only adequately, are somewhat blind. Norris is more than the magnificent reporter, he is the masterful realist. His is the Defoe method. He understands perfectly the selection of detail. His details bear with unfailing accuracy on the development of his emotional theme. He does not, it is true, write with fire, with poetry, or with passion. He is not that kind of writer; but in "Bread" he stirs the emotions to pity, hate, and occasionally to amusement. "Salt", I liked. "Brass" did not appeal to me, possibly because I didn't understand what Mr. Norris was driving at. "Bread" seems to me a fine novel, and one that can stand up bravely alongside the best of our current fiction and forge ahead of most of it.

A Lady of Curious Standards but of Great Heart

STILL a third portrait of a lady. Jean Huguenot is a nice contrast to Jeannette Sturgis — and Benét writes with all the passion, the poetry, the freedom, that Norris abjures. The result in this latest novel of one of our youngest novelists is thoroughly satisfactory. "Jean Huguenot" reminds one in tone, even in subject matter, of Swinnerton. It is the story of a southern beauty, wilful, passionate, uncontrolled; of her marriage, of her unfaithfulness, of her carnal drifting into prostitution, of her final salvation. Its dramatic moments are powerful, its tragedy is fine, its humor is often irresistible. A freer book, less carefully planned, perhaps, than either of the others; but for sheer spirit, charm, and impetuosity you will find few characters this season to match wild Jean Huguenot.

The Character Sketch Deified

THESE pages this month are proving to be one elaborate superlative after another. How can I help it? In "Raw Material" Dorothy Canfield seems to me to have surpassed herself. She has drawn pictures from life which have the quality of rarest fiction. She has arranged these characters informally, yet so as to make up a whole comedy of human strength and frailty. Perhaps you are not a New Englander, perhaps you, therefore, will not feel just the way I do about it; but whatever else you may be reading this autumn, put it aside long enough to turn to page 69 of "Raw Material" and read "Old Man Warner". It is as perfect a picture of Vermont life as "The Death of the Hired Man". It is like Frost's poem in its completeness — this sketch is a work of art. I don't see how it could be better! In her introduction Mrs. Fisher explains herself:

> In this unrelated, unorganized bundle of facts, I give you just the sort of thing from which a novelist makes principal or secondary characters, or episodes in a novel. I offer them to you for the novels you are writing inside your own heads, before I have spoiled them by the additions, cuttings, stretchings, or twistings necessary to make

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them fit into the fabric of a book. I give them to you, rounded and whole, just as they happened, without filing and smoothing truth down to the limits of possibility as all fiction-writers are forced to do. I spare you all the long-winded conventional devices, descriptions, transitions, exposition, eloquent passages and the like, by which writers try to divert the minds of their readers from the inherent improbability of their stories, devices which, to the suspicious mind, resemble the patter of thimbleriggers at a county fair. You know as well as I how inherently improbable life is. Why pretend that it is not? I have treated you just as though you were that other self in me who is my best reader. I have given you the fare I like best.

Behind the Lines

MRS. WHARTON has added another fine and true war book to the list which includes "Three Soldiers", "Through the Wheat", "The Odyssey of a Torpedoed Transport", and one or two others. She has written as realistic a picture as any, yet she writes only of what she knew, felt, saw. "A Son at the Front" is a great piece of interpretative reporting. It is a story of the intricate events and emotions which made the social background of the war. Mrs. Wharton has taken a fresh, brave, thoroughly admirable American youth, around which to gather her people. It is the people who love George Campton that make this book, and they are various. Not only has Mrs. Wharton succeeded in her portrait of the war fabric, but she has written a powerful study of the artistic temperament, and of divorce. She has used her superb technique, her clear understanding, for a picture worth painting. In the face of this heartrending but beautiful book we can forgive even the vapidities of "The Glimpses of the Moon".

Voluminous Detail

BARTON CURRIE, editor of "The Ladies' Home Journal", considers "Feet of Clay" the best magazine serial he has published for some time. It is indubitably a popular book, and a clever one. It is packed with emotional detail, even as Kathleen Norris packs her novels with realistic detail. Mrs. Tuttle draws characters with something of the sureness of Mary Roberts Rinehart. She tells a story forcefully and well. She supports her strong emotional undercurrent by a wealth of cleverly contrived dramatic incident. The story of a mother and a daughter, and of how the daughter almost repeats her mother's marriage tragedy, is not without its moments of real understanding. An enjoyable novel, and one which will be much read during the current season.

Stage Hand Sophistication

CARL VAN VECHTEN has been much steeped in the writings of Ronald Firbank, the gossip of stage hands, the stories of milliner's assistants, and the pages of "La Vie Parisienne". With his really brilliant equipment as a writer he has chosen to weave these factors into a perverse, readable, and amusing story, which is as unworthy of him as it is nasty. It is neither very good as a shocker nor very penetrating as a satire; but if it does not offend you at the start, it may possibly amuse you, and if you are really a nice person, you will not understand a great deal of it, thank heaven! What a pity for a man who can write so well to write such a sublimated edition of a Broadway scandal sheet. —*J. F.*

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THE BOOK OF THE MONTH

FABRE'S "LIFE OF THE SCORPION"

By William Beebe

Mr. Beebe's review is the tenth of a series of longer book reviews to be published each month in THE BOOKMAN. *The books discussed will not necessarily be new nor will they be books which have never before been reviewed in the magazine. The aim of the editors is to present, in the selection of volumes and reviewers, articles which shall constitute solid pieces of criticism.*

"THERE is hardly anything but magic abroad before seven o'clock in the morning", as Stella Benson says and as Fabre knows, and to this fact is due much of the point of view which people in general exhibit toward the master entomologist. Those who use the most adulatory phrases and marveling hyperboles are usually quite as far apart from Fabre's life and life work as those who see only the comic side of a bug man — and there is a host of comedy in such a one. An octogenarian solemnly absorbed in the courtship and life tragedy of a scorpion is pure culture Briggs-Ding-Fox material. But so is a man messily immersed in the inorganic innards of his car, and so is a first night critic seriously commenting on the simulated emotions of an actress. I have driven cars and planes for many years, but when anything wrong develops, my thoughts and impulses turn garage or hangarward, and I hold the thought of a mechanic. I could easily worship my engine, perhaps because I can never understand it — it is to me a terrible golemic thing, exhibiting inexplicable, inhuman, orthogenic life, or else absolute death. If I could think of it as a small piece of thunder and lighting, a bit of canned cosmic energy, it would help. A play, on the other hand, is to me never a thing to criticize — it is life itself, and if sometimes it seems a weak or pitiful life, it is still of a piece with the so called real life of many people I know. And if it is a magic life which is enacted, why it only reminds me of a caterpillar and butterfly, or a hen pheasant acquiring brilliant cock plumage through mutilation.

Now Fabre, or any naturalist, deeply concerned with the strange and terrible courtship of a scorpion, is dealing not with a mere mechanism of steel and gas, nor with any pretense, rehearsal, or imaginary situation, but with a phenomenon directly comparable with similar emotions in ourselves. All this I record solely because of its relation to B.-S. Magic, which itself is only a shedding of some of our city bred fear and absurd human apartism.

Fabre was not a martyr to science, nor a personality to be pitied because of his poverty and long delayed recognition. If he had been born a millionaire he would probably have done much the same things that he did, a little harder and faster and less thoroughly. As it was, he was not obsessed with the study of insects from childhood — it came later, almost casually, when

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he was eighteen years old, in the year 1843. In the room in which he learned his alphabet (which was also "a school, a kitchen, a bedroom, a dining-room, and, at times, a chicken-house and *porcherie*"), he pondered on chromos far other than scientific — crude pictures of the Wandering Jew, Golo, Mr. Credit, and Our Lady of the Seven Dolours. Not until, as a young schoolmaster, he began to teach geometry in an open field — a pragmatic, Squeersian method of sorts — did Fabre begin to notice insects. His pupils neglected his rods and chains in order to suck out the honey from the nests of wild bees, and an incipient chemist and mathematician became one of the greatest of field naturalists.

Many of us have read and reread his "Souvenirs Entomologiques", but now for the first time his complete works appear in English. The final volume is "The Life of the Scorpion", translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos and Bernard Miall. To the former is due the credit of phraseology of all the preceding Fabre volumes, and the achievement is worthy of the subject matter. De Mattos does not hesitate to modernize his material as when, referring to young scorpion gallants, for "*Il leur faut des tendrons*" he writes, "They must have sprightly flappers." Seldom has the spirit of an original tongue — the wit, the excellent diction, the apt word — been so satisfactorily translated as in these fourteen volumes.

The ultra technologist will complain of the padding, the asides, the casual references, the indirect approach, but it is an exceedingly good thing for the ultra technologist occasionally to find his naked truths clothed in something besides type and paper, to have to wade through similes and worthy metaphors, and digest a reasonable amount of literary pulp, before reaching the concentrated factual seeds. The keenly interested naturalist will regret Fabre's boasted neglect of book learning, for too often a whole chapter of most important observations will be found to refer to an insect identified only by some local, native name, applicable to any one of a half dozen species. But the strength of this writer lies in the fact that entomologists *must* go to him for many observations which no one else has had the patience to make, and the interested layman *can* read and enjoy him without reference to dictionary, textbook, or scientific tutor.

Comparisons are not always odious but often mutually enlightening. Fabre, like Burroughs and Thoreau, was essentially a back yard naturalist, but in the matter of concentration on any given subject, Fabre is to Burroughs as Burroughs is to Thoreau. In an average paragraph Burroughs is inclined to direct the reader's glance around the complete horizon, while Thoreau often indicates the ground beneath and the heavens above as well. Fabre holds steadily to the monocular vision, not only of a particular bee or spider or wasp, but of some single phase of its life, and yet with no lessening of literary variety, no slackening of cosmic interest in this almost atomic happening.

There is no need to criticize Fabre's books. This has been done to repletion. The last volume of the scorpion is interesting and worth reading by both dramatic critic and naturalist and all between. On the very first page Fabre shows his genius: "The Scorpion is an uncommunicative creature, secret in his practices and disagreeable to deal with, so that his history, apart from anatomical detail, amounts to little or nothing. . . . He has at all times appealed to the popular imagination, even to the point of figuring among the

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signs of the zodiac. Fear made the gods, said Lucretius. Deified by terror, the Scorpion is immortalized in the sky by a constellation and in the almanac by the symbol for the month of October."

In late April and early May the scorpion forgets his lethargy and sets forth a-wooing. He meets an attractive *tendron* and clasps her pincer fingers in his. They then may remain absolutely quiescent for hours, or he gently leads her to the shelter of a neighboring potsherd. During this antenuptial promenade mysterious rites are performed. Both stand upon their heads — "*Pour déclarer sa flamme, le Scorpion fait l'arbre droit.*" Fabre is tempted to say that the affectionate couple kiss repeatedly, for the foreheads touch, the two mouths come together. But head, face, lips, cheeks, all are missing. When we look for a face we are confronted with a dead wall of hideous jaws. Lest the sensitive human reader should close the book at this point to return to more pleasant thoughts of human physiognomy, may I recall the photographs of our lip-distended brothers in Africa which recently appeared in some magazine? Or if a more personal touch is desired, let anyone look at his clean and velvet skin under a microscope. If the scorpion is loathsome or at least unæsthetic, we shall have to look elsewhere than to ourselves for a truthful substitute. The trouble lies not with either, but with our "thinking makes it so."

We men cannot but cheer the diminutive scorpion of corresponding sex, for he is a very brave fellow creature. Courtship is for him often a time of danger, and success means only death. All his strength and blandishments are concentrated on persuading the chosen one to enter his little castle — while the marriage morn will in all probability reveal the lady absentmindedly devouring the last remnants of her husband. As Fabre says, "The ritual demands that he shall be eaten after the wedding. What a strange world, in which the victim drags the sacrificer by main force to the altar."

So if we do not look at ourselves with a devastating microscope, and if we can always materialize a mechanic, and never are disillusioned by bad actors, and can kneel with Fabre and watch a scorpion as well as a butterfly with breathless interest, we are worthy to know Before-Seven Magic.

The Life of the Scorpion. By J. Henri Fabre. Translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos and Bernard Miall. Dodd, Mead and Co.

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A SHELF OF RECENT BOOKS

DR. HALL CONFESSES BUT DOESN'T REPENT

By Joseph Collins

THIRTY-FIVE years ago a Yankee wagonmaker who had gone to California as a "forty-niner" and piled up a fortune thought to immortalize his name by founding a university in Worcester, Massachusetts. It should be a beacon light to other educational institutions, their emulation and envy. Realizing that he was lacking concrete pedagogical ideas, that he was devoid of, even antipathic to the principles of organization and cooperation, and, at least, suspicious of his prejudices, Jonas Gilman Clark was persuaded by his counselor and friend, the late Senator Hoar, to ask a young professor of psychology at Johns Hopkins University, a froward, self-confident, energetic man of promise, to plan and steer his venture. Now Dr. G. Stanley Hall tells us how he did it, and how his forebears and parents, his education and environment, permitted him to do it.

The story is an interesting one, and aside from the personality of Dr. Hall, whose purpose it is to reveal that he may better understand himself, it throws a light upon the road that education has traveled in this country the past third of a century, a light that is neither so illuminating nor dazzling as he seems to think it is. Perhaps the consensus of opinion of psychologists and pedagogues might not give Dr. Hall the rating in either of these fields that he gives himself. He has been a conspicuous figure in both of them and he has been extremely articulate. Far beyond the psalmist's allotted age he believes he will yet do "a few things which shall be better than I have ever yet been able to do".

The reviewer believes he will.

Dr. Hall has always prided himself on being a straight, hard hitter. It pleased him enormously to be called "l'enfant terrible" of psychology. He has not always been able to speak out what has been in his mind, but now he is determined to do it. There will be much diversity of opinion whether either he or we shall have profit of it.

Solomon was unquestionably right about many things, but Dr. Hall does not agree that humility should go before honor. "In the view I have attained of man, his place in nature, his origin and destiny, I believe I have become a riper product of the present stage of civilization than most of my contemporaries; have out-grown more superstitions, attained clearer insights, and have a deeper sense of peace within myself. I love but perhaps still more pity mankind, groping and stumbling, often slipping backward along the upward Path, which I believe I see just as clearly as Jesus, or Buddha did."

Though not for a moment would I appear to be either a champion of the use of the word "some" as an adjective, or a habitual user of it, I maintain that this is *some* statement. And why leave out Mahomet? Most of us, subject to hours and days of self-depreciation, inadequacy, unworthiness,

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will envy the self-satisfaction and self-complacency of this retired pedagogue. But in reality it does not suffice him: "As I advance in years there are few things I crave more and feel more keenly the lack of than companionship." Even review of successes and contemplation of accomplishments do not shut out loneliness. There is no record that Jesus or Buddha was lonely.

From his earliest days Dr. Hall had what the Freudians call an inferiority complex. His childish self-consciousness, his juvenile aloofness, his mature bumptiousness, his senescent strenuousness all testify it. He became aware of it early in life and strove hard to overcome it. But like the fetters of Hephæstus it could neither be snapped nor loosened. Like them its substance was as subtle as spider's web and so cunningly contrived that none might see it even of the blessed gods. The above quoted statement may be construed as a last effort to extricate himself from the crafty net.

Dr. Hall is an ardent Freudian. "Nothing since Aristotle's categories has gone deeper, or in my opinion is destined to have such far reaching influence and results", is the characteristic way he estimates the Freudian mechanisms. It matters nothing to him that psychoanalysis and the study of the unconscious have made small appeal to the majority of trained psychologists of this or any other country. He attributes this to the prudish reluctance of his colleagues to face the momentous problems of sex life. They deny it; at least, his successor at Johns Hopkins, the professor at Columbia, the successor to William James at Harvard, and many others do. But the momentous problems of sex life have not balked Dr. Hall. He confesses to "a love for glimpsing at first hand the raw side of human life", and he records the unique thrill he has experienced at the numerous prize fights that he has attended "unknown and away from home". Moreover the seamy side of life has seemed to him as valuable in some respects as the psychological laboratory. "In many American and especially in foreign cities, Paris where vice was most sophisticated; London where it was coarsest, Vienna which I thought the worst of all, I found, generally through hotel clerks, a guide to take me through the underworld by night to catch its psychological flavor." Some reader, low minded and altogether contemptible, will be base enough to believe that there was other motive. It is a dangerous business anyway. Even Dr. Hall says he had a narrow escape once — his life, not his morals — in a den of Apaches in Paris. About the year Dr. Hall was called to Clark University a clergyman in New York and a pious young vice hunter had their motives for visiting such places questioned. The clergyman stood the shock but his reforming friend went off his head. The reformatory urge, though not a fundamental one, often needs to be curbed, especially when it is entangled with a lust of curiosity.

Dr. Hall has always had a weakness for new, bizarre, hybrid words, and he finds difficulty in giving adequate vent to his emotions and cognitions in one language. Therefore one is not astonished to find the present volume constellated with French, German, Latin words and phrases. He frequently speaks of his *éclaircissement*. He has various kinds: religious, social, political, economic, and even ethical. He has been very fond of giving *aperçus;* being irreverent to the *ipsissima verba;* and he can never quite forget the *hegira* from Clark University after

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the visit of a certain Harper; he still hears the echo of *vox clamantis in deserto;* and he will talk of the *vita sexualis.* But it is to be presumed that anyone lured by an autobiography of one of our leading educators will be able to translate these words. At any rate he is not likely to have any more trouble with them than he is with some of the sentences in English. For instance the Professor, speaking of the necessity of educating the will and the heart as well as the intellect, says:

"Nothing else can save us and I shall live, and hope to die when my time comes, convinced that this goal is not only not unattainable but that we are, on the whole, with however many and widespread regressions, making progress, surely if slowly and in the right directions."

And again when saying a good word for the "seminary": "The rabulist, the sophist, the debater, the man of saturated orthodoxy, the literalist, and the dullard will all be held in check if the seminary is rightly pervaded with the phenomena of altitude." Yes, indeed, but what will save the bromide, the smart Aleck, the hardboiled, that's the question. Is there any phenomenon or altitude that will accomplish that?

I have always understood it was Worcester, not Webster, who said: "It is I who am surprised; you are astonished", when he returned home and saw his mother-in-law being kissed by the butler. I must have been mistaken, for Dr. Hall says that he was surprised and delighted when he got an invitation, after some lean years as a tutor, to deliver a course of lectures in Baltimore. The sensation of the butler and Dr. Hall must have been the same, only on the reverse side of the shield.

Dr. Hall wrote this book to find out more about himself than he knew before. I hope he has been successful. I know more about him than I did before, though I have been fairly familiar with his life in the open the past quarter of a century. He says many interesting things about himself; with some of them I find it hard to agree. For instance, that he is a mixture of masochistic and sadistic impulses. It may be so, but they are not fifty fifty. One predominates.

Somewhere in the "Tale of a Tub" Swift says that happiness is a perpetual possession of being well deceived. Were it true, the writer of this autobiography had rarely experienced happiness save perhaps in Berlin where he learned "how great an enlightener love is, and what a spring of mind Eros can be".

Life and Confessions of a Psychologist. G. Stanley Hall. D. Appleton and Co.

AN OUTLINE OF HEROES

By Gerald Hewes Carson

PERHAPS in the current popularity of "outlines" we may discover that ubiquitous but always dimly seen individual, the "general" reader. Studied in the light of the non-fiction section of the best seller lists, he acquires mind and personality.

The general reader is a delightfully undisciplined person. His voracity for assorted information is characteristic only of a democratic society such as ours, where it is possible to begin at the bottom and work up. The general reader is at, or near, the bottom, and eager to work up, through certain healthy stages of self-dissatisfaction and mild intellectual curiosity, to the

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delectable heights where knowledge is available in synthetic form, put up in convenient, plainly marked, and nationally advertised packages.

This omnipresent individual, the general reader, has implicit faith in "experts", and in the absolute character of all human knowledge. For him art, literature, science, and anthropology have now been made attractive and palatable through the medium of easy generalization. For him, too, the Gentleman with a Duster has written "Seven Ages", "a modest effort to assist . . . the plain man, whose education has not helped him to trace the genealogy of his own opinions". The Gentleman has built his narrative upon the life and work of seven men who have affected profoundly the Anglo-Saxon heritage. The seven heroes of human thought are Socrates, Aristotle, Jesus Christ, St. Augustine, Erasmus, Oliver Cromwell, and John Wesley. The merits of each are set forth in a facile and insinuating style, and from each is distilled a special, unique quality, which furnishes "average persons" with clichés for the easy recollection of the race's mental pilgrimage these last 2,200 years.

Socrates was "the originating genius of common sense" — "a realist in the region of idealism". Aristotle "laid the foundations of all the positive sciences". Jesus taught the true inwardness of man's relation to God, bestowing upon the human heart "the increasing consciousness of the immortality of spiritual values". St. Augustine envisaged the moral law as ruling a world state — Christendom. Erasmus saved the humanism of classical literature for modern England. Cromwell ladled off the dross of a materialistic age. John Wesley revealed to men "that religion is a power personal to the individual soul".

These are the conclusions of the Duster. We must recognize, of course, the limitations of his summary on this grand scale: conclusions must be stated without their premises, or presentation of evidence to support the premises; huge gaps in history must be bridged in a paragraph; all philosophers, princes, and scientists other than the Seven must be assigned positions distinctly subordinate to what the Duster has selected as the presiding genius of the age; and complex matters must be stated with an unqualified, emphatic, illusive simplicity.

The presentation is vivacious, felicitous, and sound enough for its purpose. One can scarcely challenge the Gentleman's selections for his first five heroes. But as to Cromwell, whom the Duster, like Carlyle, Frederic Harrison, and Theodore Roosevelt, admires exceedingly, and John Wesley, whose influence has become formalized and sectarian, there is room for a sharp division of opinion. Science, in the last three hundred years, has molded society far more subtly than expanding political or religious ideals; has, indeed, been largely responsible for whatever liberalism religion and politics have reluctantly assimilated. My own nominations for alternates in the Duster's symposium would be Newton, Darwin, or Mendel — Newton, who propelled the intellectual forces of the eighteenth century; Darwin, who revolutionized the science and caused a restatement of the evangelical religion of the nineteenth century; and Mendel, who, one may safely predict, will fix the trend of biology (and so, the social mind) throughout the twentieth century.

Seven Ages. A Brief and Simple Narrative of the Pilgrimage of the Human Mind as it has Affected the English-Speaking World. By A Gentleman with a Duster. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

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THE LITERARY CLINIC

By Laurence Stallings

DR. JOSEPH COLLINS, psychiatrist, was guilty of a terrific breach of critical etiquette when, without invitation, he recently appeared in the sick room of literature and proceeded to diagnose every chronic case in the ward. Gathered about the various patients were the local practitioners of criticism, solemnly wagging their beards over D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce. Dr. Collins held no certificate from the local board, knew none of those in the practising profession, and paid scant heed to their methods of treatment.

Had the doctor been content to examine the patient, form his private conclusions and then quietly depart, there would have been no great professional animosity toward the man. But he lacked professional manners. Indeed, he published his findings in a book which he called "The Doctor Looks at Literature", without so much as comparing his views with those of the savants of the literary profession. He might have lessened the breach had he revealed his findings before some clinic in this or that dining room or club; but he was tactless in his revelation.

For three months I have been enjoying the reviews of the doctor's extraordinary book. The consulting critics have behaved toward him for all the world as though he were a newly arrived graduate from the Correspondence School of Chiropractics. All have turned their backs upon him and discussed the patients in low tones and significant nods since he arrived. Only on one point did they welcome him: he was the only man in the clinic capable of giving D. H. Lawrence the rough treatment they thought the author of "Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious" had merited by recent behavior. Reviewers can be discerned cheering as Dr. Collins slips a half-nelson over the unfortunate head of Mr. Lawrence and then proceeds to knead him roughly in the interests of science. The work in question is found to contain, says Dr. Collins, "more misinformation in a small space than any recent book save 'The Cruise of the Kawa' ".

In all other judgments the doctor has been declared at grievous fault. Whether he speaks of James Joyce or Dostoyevsky or Sinclair Lewis he is not permitted a hearing. A critical strong man, he is thanked for shaking Mr. Lawrence and told to depart. One of his greatest offenses is his refusal to puzzle his mind over the symbolism of "Ulysses". Dr. Collins feels certain that symbols are possible of revelation only by the creator of them, and that their meaning even if disclosed would not change appreciation of the book to any great extent.

One breathes a sigh of relief at this advice. Dr. Collins may be an efficient physician, but he offers his followers an easy method of application in swallowing "Ulysses". And this is something no one else has so far invented. Heretofore one has been convinced that only one out of every ten men capable of appreciating the works of Professor Einstein is even to be considered a candidate for the honor of reading the latest anecdote by Mr. Joyce.

As for the gibberish of Mr. Leopold Bloom in that strange book: the doctor finds it the most perfect specimen of psychological reporting. To the initiated, he says, the train of thought in Mr. Bloom's brain is as legible as the handwriting upon the wall. And by the initiated he means those who

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have given some study to the pathology of perversion. The lay reader is hence pardoned his lack of observation. He can readily excuse himself on the ground that never has he been a close observer of perverts.

The reader who approaches "The Doctor Looks at Literature" with the expectancy of reaching precise judgments seems to me to be attacking the work from the wrong salient. The writer admits in his title that he is only a doctor come to look in upon those strange shapes that writhe and suffer through modern fiction. It is only fair that the doctor should have a look into the field that has come to resemble the greensward of a sanitarium for the care of psychopathic curiosities. It is only medical luck that he should be wrong in certain diagnoses. He makes no more mistakes, say, than the average practitioner.

It seems that more books from doctors will be a distinctly salutary influence in modern fiction. The jacket of the present book claims that Dr. Collins has established a new rationale of criticism. Perhaps he has; it really makes no difference to the lay reader who has long wondered what a doctor thinks about when reading "Ulysses" or "Women in Love". The main point is that Dr. Collins has satisfied this curiosity and has declared that he is familiar with many of the figures in the modern novel through professional visits to insane asylums. Until this pronouncement came, one had begun to doubt his own sanity in the midst of those who claimed their own.

One could speculate on the criticism of the future. Time was when a novelist could fall back upon Freud for his mystifying processes. Now the layman has digested Freud and he no longer mystifies. Then too, the authority has been tumbled considerably by his own and other admissions. Possibly the critic of the future will require as much ground work as a Jesuit missionary. There will be four years' grounding in the fundamentals of biology before the novice is even allowed the privilege of reading a book by Mr. Lawrence.

The Doctor Looks at Literature. By Joseph Collins. George H. Doran Company.

PRIMA DONNA CLOSE UPS

By Fortune Gallo

"THE ART OF THE PRIMA DONNA", the latest addition to Frederick Martens's valuable musician series, reads almost like a guide book to operatic fame. It should prove to be of great benefit and interest to both aspiring vocal student and opera lover. It is helpful and inspiring to the first, as it offers many valuable hints relative to the practical side of an operatic career, and holds the latter's attention because it reveals many of the fascinating little details of a prima donna's existence that are not ordinarily known on the spectator's side of the footlights.

I like the way the author gets the facts. He is the ideal interviewer, because he knows what his public wants. Take, for instance, the case of Tamaki Miura, the celebrated little Japanese prima donna who is a leading artist in my San Carlo Company, and who is particularly noted for her realistic performance of Puccini's "Madame Butterfly". First he gets some practical information, something tangible, like this:

"Formerly, the day before I had to sing Madame Butterfly in opera, I used to practice a whole hour; but now I do not practice

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when I am to sing Madame Butterfly the next day. You see, it is a great strain to sing continuously for three hours on the stage, and I cannot help putting so much feeling, so much emotion into that rôle — it is a rôle that is all sentiment — that I find I do best with a whole day of rest before the performance, otherwise I have a regular routine for the days when I am to sing in the evening. I get up at ten o'clock, sing my exercises — scales and difficult vocal phrases — in the bathroom and music room. Then at eleven, I have coffee, eggs and a roll, and take a walk. At four in the afternoon I eat a real meal; good spaghetti, lamb chops, spinach, with a cup of tea; and at six I have a cup of coffee and some chicken sandwiches. Then at eight o'clock I sing on the stage, taking a couple of eggs again in the theatre, for they are very strengthening."

Then he gets some really helpful technical advice for the student, diverting the attention from time to time with something highly interesting such as this passage:

"It is natural, of course, that Madame Butterfly should be my favorite opera rôle. She is a Japanese heroine and I am a Japanese artist and have the figure and also an understanding of the part from the racial angle which, perhaps, no other opera singer can claim to have. I do not have to imagine how poor Butterfly feels, I really *know*. Her soul and mind are Japanese, as are my own."

Mr. Martens's book has an additional merit in being absolutely up to date. Not only are many of the established prime donne of long standing listed, but most of the best known younger ones now before the public are included. For contemporary publicity purposes this will make the volume a valuable reference work for some years to come.

The book contains interviews with the following singers: Lucrezia Bori, Sophie Braslau, Emma Calve, Anna Case, Florence Easton, Geraldine Farrar, Amelita Galli-Curci, Mabel Garrison, Ursula Greville, Frieda Hempel, Louise Homer, Marie Ivogun, Maria Jeritza, Tamaki Miura, Sigrid Onegin, Rosa Ponselle, Rosa Raisa, Elisabeth Rethberg, Ernestine Schumann-Heink, and Alice Verlet.

The Art of the Prima Donna. By Frederick H. Martens. D. Appleton and Co.

RECENT BOOKS IN BRIEF REVIEW

AMERICAN life entered upon a new phase with the coming of national prohibition, and signs are not wanting that Prohibition is going to develop a literature of its own. Most curious among the early chronicles is "The Real Story of a Bootlegger" (Boni, Liveright) which is published as an anonymous work, and an authentic one. The narrative recounts how the author, by practising the formula of the conventional success story, made a million dollars out of Prohibition and retired, while still in his thirties, to contemplate in comfort a useful and industrious career. The revelations of the tricks of the trade are timely, and doubtless will have a personal and most practical application for those readers who view the volume as a kind of handbook. There can be no question as to whether the book is authentic or no; it isn't. No bootlegger was ever quite so naïve as to write, in what is ostensibly serious vein, that "if you have any strength of character, you can be temperate under Prohibition almost as well as

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you can without Prohibition." Nor was any bootlegger ever subtle ironist enough to write, "In my business, the same as everywhere else, you have got to have nerve and vision; but along with them you need hard work, sobriety and honesty." Aside from the hoax of the authorship, the book is as well informed as any bootlegger could make it, its incidents have all really happened (or might well have happened), and its workmanship is far better than that of any bootlegger now engaged in literary work.

"A Mind That Found Itself" (Doubleday, Page), the autobiography of Clifford Whittingham Beers, is a revised edition of a remarkable document first published fifteen years ago. This narrative fulfilled, and is still fulfilling, its purpose: to inform the public of the commonest and most curable of the insanities, viz. manic-depressive, and to urge the formulation and application of the fundamental principles of mental hygiene. Mr. Beers may gratefully recall the day he thanked God and took courage to publish his book.

The day of the four rigger and the galleon is past — yearly the sea with its romantic trappings is being changed from a rolling field of adventure into the calmer, more conventional aspects of commercialism. In "Sailor Town Days" (Houghton Mifflin) C. Fox Smith has reached out quickly and gathered in much of the older phases of the sea: everything from China clippers to Salem clippers, Limehouse Dock to Paradise Street. One suspects Miss Smith of being something of a Samuel Butler — hiding behind dock posts, notebook in hand. There are a half dozen illustrations, pencil sketches by Phil W. Smith depicting the sea settings, in their way quite as admirable as the author's prose descriptions.

There have been several poets of the Negro race, but none with a deeper consciousness of the wrongs of the race than Georgia Douglas Johnson, author of "Bronze" (Brimmer). The feeling that she is an alien, twilight faced, branded, mantled, dethroned by a hue, sings itself over and over in her poems. The best of them are that small residuum in which she rises above her personal and racial bitterness, a feeling which may well be understood, but which is not enjoyable as a constant iteration in verse. In "Cosmopolite", "When I Rise Up", and "Faith", Mrs. Johnson has reached a high level which one hopes to see again in her books to come.

In "The Unadjusted Girl", published by Little, Brown and Company as a Supplement to the "Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology", William I. Thomas gives a discussion of the whys of female delinquency which is as vividly interesting as it is enlightening. He starts with the psychological truth that every normal individual is guided by four instinctive wishes: the desire for new experience; the desire for security; the desire for response; and the desire for recognition. An individual life in which all these four types of wishes are not satisfied in some measure and some form cannot be called normal. With these facts in mind, the author gives the life histories of over one hundred "unadjusted" girls and women, showing the forces, within and without, that brought failure in each case and suggesting, in the end, an approach to the problem that would make use of

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these fundamental truths. The book is intended for social workers and students of criminology, but the layman will find it a more thrilling human document than the great majority of fiction. It is the raw material of which fiction is made.

"Motion Pictures in Education" (Crowell), by Don Carlos Ellis and Laura Thornborough, is the first of what will undoubtedly be many books on the subject. It discusses visual aids in education, gives the arguments for and against the use of films, and devotes the remaining chapters to methods of installing, operating, and using the pictures.

Arty black covers flecked with gold suggest that "Hunting a Hair Shirt" by Aline Kilmer (Doran) is just another of those beautifully printed but quite inconsequential books that look well on a bedside table next the antique candlesticks. It is a pleasant jolt, therefore, to find that the author's "spiritual adventures" reveal a sparkle of elusive truths picked up among the trivialities of everyday living. Mrs. Kilmer is a philosopher who travels light and goes far. Her essays on "The Helplessness of Adults" and "Hope" contain the grimly humorous discoveries that children rule the world with an iron and irresponsible hand and that hope is not all the Christian martyrs cracked it up to be. In these eleven sketches are more than merely before-going-to-sleep chuckles — but not so much more as to spoil a good night's rest.

The Plumb plan, not only for the railroads but for American industry in general, is proposed in "Industrial Democracy; A Plan for its Achievement" (Huebsch) by Glenn Plumb and William G. Roylance. The book shows a very solid confidence in liberty of the traditional American type and a great fear that modern industrial development is killing it. The presentation of the plan is preceded by a history of the growth of democracy and the decay of autocracy, written in a manner likely to irritate both radicals and conservatives. The authors quote some high sounding phrases on liberty, for example, from judicial opinions which quashed important welfare legislation. The "incentive" of profit as a social force is thoroughly condemned before any attempt is made to outline the proposed plan. But once the authors get on their way, they are convincing enough. In fact, the enthusiastic presentation overcomes a good deal of rather stodgy writing.

In her first book of poems, Jessica Nelson North has woven "A Prayer Rug" (Ransom) of great beauty. Some of the poems are slight, but only a few are trivial. The rest are clever, young, careless, fine, and possessing an occasional fire which is more than phosphorescence. Their imagery is especially vivid and unforced, and their lines are musical. They are like and unlike Edna St. Vincent Millay's work, though the likeness seems more in the nature of the two poets than in the influence of one upon the other.

When a biographer reveals a man's — or woman's — foibles as well as his virtues, this particular reader is satisfied. Ambroise Vollard has made such revelations in "Paul Cézanne: His Life and Art" (Brown), which is translated by Harold L. Van Doren and illustrated with sixteen Cézanne reproductions. Not that there is any shocking bohemianism in this, for

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there is not. Unless such an atmosphere played a part in the strange art of this man, it does not belong. The foibles given here are those of the artist rather than those of the man, and they leave one feeling an intimacy with the artist's studio instead of his apartment. In addition, there are entertaining sketches of Zola, who was a close companion of the painter. This is more than a volume for the artist and Cézanne idolator. It is a study of a revolutionist in art of which, be the frequently broadcast reports true, today's world is full. Much that moved Cézanne moves the protestants of 1923, and so the book is a study of today's revolt against old standards and the ever new but always old search for truth.

England has the most uninteresting cities, and the most attractive rural landscape in the world. In "As It Is in England" (McBride) Albert B. Osborne has charmingly registered the spirit of the country by considering its quaint villages, its castles and abbeys, and its innumerable natural beauties. One cannot but agree with the author that England alone can give to the lover of "just country" his very heart's desire. Here is a book that ought to fascinate even the wiseacres of travel. Although a devoted admirer of England, Mr. Osborne did not limit his wandering to her shores alone. He rambled from town to hamlet all over Europe, and in another delightful volume, "Finding the Worth While in Europe" (McBride), he has made his presence in the various localities vividly felt. What he admired he wrote about in an enthusiastic and essentially personal way. What failed to interest him he ignored; what he detested he attacked without mercy. Albert Osborne was no ordinary traveler, and his books like his travels are far from commonplace. These volumes, originally published several years ago, are now offered to the public in revised form, replete with beautiful illustrations.

Lamb once wrote a number of essays "On Popular Fallacies" to disprove generally held beliefs. Herman Oncken has written a book "The Historical Rhine Policy of the French" (Huebsch) to uphold the popular belief which may be phrased as follows: "These French have always been after that Rhine territory. The talk about rightful claims is poppycock." When Julius Cæsar conquered Gaul, he found the tribes fighting over the rule of the Rhineland. Charlemagne's son divided his realm, giving to his son Lothar the Rhineland, and Lothar's brothers promptly went to war over the land. It has been more or less in dispute ever since. Mr. Oncken's volume is one more book on the dispute.

The cook and the kettle become a subtly erudite pair in "Evaporation" (Modern Review), a collection of verse by Mark Turbyfill and Samuel Putnam. Of the two writers, Turbyfill has more nearly mastered idea and idiom. Putnam's verse and prose are turgid with many unconvincing images, matted with abstruse terms out of a medical dictionary. Little commonplaces are tricked out with gargantuan words. A dish, for instance, is thus interpreted:

> Spill implies
> plenitude or shallow. Choose.
> A dimensional pruriency
> lifts the skirts of a mythos.
> Puris omnia. Benedicat
> dominus deus noster
> infantium libidinem.

Behind the weighted erudition of vo-

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cabulary and theory of poetry expounded, one feels, perhaps deludedly, that two very young people have been taking very solid courses in science for several years at college, and have tried to get at poetry by the laboratory method — and with the wrong textbook.

A relish for life and its secrets, together with romance as such relegated to an infinitesimal part of the workaday existence, seems the inevitable essence of "The Story of the Development of a Youth" (Harper). Here are nearly a hundred letters written by Ernst Haeckel from the University at Würzburg home to his parents in Berlin. We find in them somewhat repetitional confessions of intense dislike at times for his then major study, anatomy; intense longing always for the things beyond; conquest of his inferiority complex; grinding devotion to the demands of his intellectual growth. This collection of home loving and life loving letters — however dull and conventional in many of their details and points of view — demands a welcome as one of the most significant documents of youth ever made widely accessible to young manhood.

One could wish that Professor William Lyon Phelps might bring to bear on contemporary movements in literature the same equable sympathy that he exerts in plotting the curves of literary giants of yesterday. In "Some Makers of American Literature" (Marshall Jones) he takes the measure of a man as the starting point for critical comment on his work. Jonathan Edwards, Franklin, Cooper, Daniel Webster, Lincoln, Hawthorne, Emerson, and Twain come under this admirable treatment. By excerpts from diaries, notebooks, and comment of contemporaries rather than by too copious references from the works of these eight writers, the whole man is graphically presented. We know that, in his own way, each of these men attained the stature of greatness. Such illuminating studies enforce additional recognition of the fact that, as personalities, our literary forebears wear exceeding well.

Many are the uses of the single tax. John Sturgis Codman in the sixty-four pages of "Unemployment and Our Revenue Problem" (Huebsch) shows how it may be applied to the solution of our unemployment and our revenue problem and to the payment of the German indemnity. Formal proof and the use of the old economic analogy of Robinson Crusoe make the book seem a bit overdidactic. But the work is easy to read, despite its formidable title, and the author must be given credit for expounding his ideas without once mentioning the single tax by name.

Katherine Hale is a barker for a rubber neck wagon, except that her verbiage is too select. In her "Canadian Cities of Romance" (Doran) she hurries one through the Dominion with the rapidity of a professional guide for tourists who has seen the sights so often that he does not want to tarry. Historical names and literary figures, most of them strangers to this country, roll from her tongue as one takes a quick look at a mentioned spot before the bus turns a corner and hides it. The book may serve as an invitation to the traveler. It lacks the qualities necessary to turn a comfortable library chair into a Pullman, however, despite the fetching sketches by Dorothy Stevens.

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

Compiled by Frank Parker Stockbridge, Life Member of the American Library Association, in Cooperation with the Public Libraries of America

"Men Like Gods" seems to have been only a flash in the pan; it has vanished from the score for August, leaving Mr. Bok once more the only author with two titles competing for popularity among library readers.

Newcomers in the August general list are Upton Sinclair's "The Goose-Step" and Gamaliel Bradford's "Damaged Souls". They have in common, of course, merely a certain scandalmongering quality, but that alone should insure continued popularity for both.

The one new fiction title to appear this month is "The Covered Wagon". Seldom does it happen that a "Saturday Evening Post" serial achieves wide popularity in book form. This one, however, was promptly made into a movie, and librarians reporting the current demand for it in nearly every instance note the local showing of the film as the cause of demand.—F. P. S.

FICTION

1.	Black Oxen	*Gertrude Atherton*	BONI
2.	One of Ours	*Willa Cather*	KNOPF
3.	His Children's Children	*Arthur Train*	SCRIBNER
4.	The Dim Lantern	*Temple Bailey*	PENN
5.	The Cathedral	*Hugh Walpole*	DORAN
6.	The Enchanted April	*"Elizabeth"*	DOUBLEDAY
7.	The Middle of the Road	*Philip Gibbs*	DORAN
8.	Faint Perfume	*Zona Gale*	APPLETON
9.	The Covered Wagon	*Emerson Hough*	APPLETON
10.	Babbitt	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT

GENERAL

1.	Life of Christ	*Giovanni Papini*	HARCOURT
2.	Life and Letters of Walter H. Page	*Burton J. Hendrick*	DOUBLEDAY
3.	The Mind in the Making	*James Harvey Robinson*	HARPER
4.	Etiquette	*Emily Post*	FUNK & WAGNALLS
5.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
6.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER
7.	A Man From Maine	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER
8.	The Goose-Step	*Upton Sinclair*	SINCLAIR
9.	Up Stream	*Ludwig Lewisohn*	BONI
10.	Damaged Souls	*Gamaliel Bradford*	HOUGHTON

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FOREIGN NOTES AND COMMENT

Sex, Stars, and a Swede

LIKE Hamlet, and that is flattering, I have already been hoist with my own petard in this business of translated books. Like every man, and that is not flattering, I had the feeling that this would be simple; that I could take the few translations that appear from month to month and dispose of them. Any problem is plain until a solution of it is undertaken. Imported translations? Every weekly and monthly that I have looked into in the past thirty days has listed a number of them. Merely to catalogue them would consume the space allotted to me. There are some thirty titles of translated works among the Borzoi books alone for the autumn of 1923. The only way, consequently, for me to disentangle myself from the trap into which I rather voluntarily walked is to make a judicious selection, and remark in passing that the rôle played at present by translations in this country is abundantly sufficient to justify the establishment of a good big magazine entitled "The Translators' Review".

Before taking up the books I have selected for this month, however, I wish to call attention to what seems to me the most reassuring bit of news that has come out of Germany in years. I have been told—and so has many another of my fellow citizens—by Germans that no foreigner, and particularly no American, could understand Goethe. The same informants have ventured the assurance that it is only the Germans who understand Shakespeare. The latter contention was based on the fact that Shakespeare has been so admirably translated, and is played in Germany many, many times where he is played once in England or America. The assertion always irritated me, and it disturbed me, for, due to my great interest in German letters, I have naturally been filled with dismay on seeing those whom I champion stultify themselves in this palpable fashion. I use the verb "stultify" purposely, for I regard him as a *stultus damnatus* who feels that there is so much more to Goethe than there is to Shakespeare. Goethe himself, who concerned himself with every phase of thought and extended them all, except physics, held precisely the opposite view. From extreme youth to extreme age, Goethe regarded himself as unworthy to sharpen Shakespeare's quill.

Now comes Carl Bleibtreu, whose opinions are worth the best consideration we can give them, with an article in the "Berliner Tageblatt" of July 26 entitled "Shakespeare as a German". He takes up case after case in a successful effort to prove that the German who knows his Shakespeare solely from the Schlegel-Tieck translation—admittedly one of the most distinguished translations known to the world—has at most only half of the great Britisher. I can give, unfortunately, only one specimen of Bleitbtreu's reasoning. He says:

> The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling they translate by *Des Dichters Aug' in schönem Wahnsinn rollen*,—and thereby supply Lombroso's "Genius and Insanity" with a motto. But this is a complete misunderstanding of the English "frenzy" which means, not *Wahnsinn* but *Verzückung*.

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Bleibtreu continues: "In thousands of places the German translation leaves the original Shakespeare sicklied o'er with a pale attempt at thought. But I cry out to my Germans: 'Halt, halt, these are enough examples to prove that he who does not know the great giant, a hardened and seasoned Englishman despite his creations on behalf of a pan-humanity, in his mother tongue knows him only half.'"

That really clears the air so far as Germany is concerned. To me it is the most precious confession that has come out of Europe since Hindenburg stood out in "his" garden in Belgium and said: "Majestät, es geht halt nicht mehr!"

Then there is a book bearing on my subject memories of which I feel constrained to refresh at this point. In 1791, Alexander Fraser Tytler (Lord Woodhouselee) published his "Essay on the Principles of Translation". It is now to be had in "Everyman's Library", edited by Ernest Rhys. It is scholarly, well written, and well edited. But what a change has come over the English speaking world in the last one hundred and thirty-two years! Tytler concerns himself almost exclusively with translations from, and into, Greek and Latin. His references to French are in the nature of digressions. The reason for this is obvious: those were the only languages that engaged the interest of the translator at the close of the eighteenth century. And today! "Tom Sawyer" is being done into classical Hebrew.

Tytler devotes a special chapter to the rendering of idiomatic phrases. He writes, with feeling, that an expression such as *rem acu tetigisti* should not be translated literally but by, say, "you have hit the nail on the head." Today, the immigrant held up at Ellis Island knows that much, though the advice is not uniformly taken by those who translate for the "houses" of So and So on Fifth Avenue.

As to the translations of non-fiction which it is gradually becoming our privilege to study — I despair at times in the face of the reviews. They — the translated books — are manifestly too replete with hitherto unconsidered facts for our critical public. There is the case of Gina Lombroso's "The Soul of Woman" (Dutton). The reviewers, women naturally, have pummeled this thoughtful Italian on the ground that she is a century behind the times; that she is advocating a "woman in the home" when that species has already vanished. This is not Dr. Lombroso's point at all; or in so far as it is, it is a mere second thought, a hint, a suggestion. What she does is to analyze the soul of woman and nothing more.

After having had a mother, and a sister, after having had the normal number of "affairs" for a man who did not marry until he had passed thirty, after eight years of married life, after a coeducational schooling, and after having taught approximately one thousand different college women, I am bound to concede my inability to refute a single important point Dr. Lombroso has made, just as I am willing to admit that she discusses quite a number of points which had never occurred to me. But so far as my own observations with the critical public have gone, this invaluable book has thus far fallen into hands that either will not or cannot follow the direction of brains.

The companion volume to it, in a way, is "The Dominant Sex" (Doran). It is a treatise such as no American would be minded to write, because, primarily, of the American's ineptitude as a linguist. And herein lies

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the key to a complete understanding of this type of study. There is no doubt that we, along with the rest of the world, are becoming internationalized. The police of New York, for example, are now convinced that they must work, fist in fist, with the police of Copenhagen, Paris, Petrograd, and so on. But our internationalization is thus far only in the making. To us, woman means the American woman. There are thoughtful people in this country who fancy that the women of all ages and all climes have borne approximately the same relation to men that obtains in the United States. Questioned on the subject, the men particularly would put tongue in cheek and say that Eve was made from Adam's rib and that, consequently, woman is a side issue.

The Vaertings, however, have looked into the matter from the world or international point of view and have found that there have been quite important civilizations in which men stayed at home, washed the dishes, minded the children, grew plump, and were wooed by women who attended to the affairs of state, did the heavy work, had angular bodies, and dominated. It is an exceedingly important fact. It has, moreover, a broadening effect to learn that there were civilizations of an extremely high order a few million years ago, that these have long since vanished from off the face of the earth, and that ours is undergoing an uncheckable change.

There is but skimpy cause to query the facts of this unusually enlightening book, however small the attempt may be, and is, to explain these facts. We are not told, for example, why male dominance exists here and female dominance there; why male dominance has existed in one country, Greece for example, at one period of its history, and female dominance at another. But the Vaertings did not essay the task of settling the whole problem and driving their deductions through and clinching them on the other side. They have merely endeavored to show that what we conventionally dub "masculine" traits or "feminine" traits are due not so much to inherent differences in the sexes as to the situation that obtains, depending upon which sex is dominant. Their argument that we are moving toward equality in the sexes is supported by a thousand signs and wonders, so that we may cheerfully overlook such negligible slips as that there is no prostitution in Wyoming because the sexes have equal rights in that much blessed state. It is, all told, a book of uncommon suggestiveness and cannot on that account help but stimulate the reader into greater breadth of intelligence.

Camille Flammarion's "Dreams of an Astronomer" (Appleton) should be read by everybody who really believes that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. For this book, a good third of which consists of a literal translation from the German of Professor Scheiner, director of the Astronomical Observatory at Potsdam, shows once again how much greater, nobler, more divine the God of a "skeptic", such as Flammarion, is than the God of the old time Sunday School which drilled its attendants into the belief that the earth is the biggest thing there is. When Flammarion proves, in his diverting manner, that the earth is but a speck of dust compared with other objects over which God also must rule (or we must believe in gods — which is altogether unacceptable), he lets in a flood of light which widens the way, in that it brightens up the limitless and fascinating expanse beyond the two walls

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in between which so many have been compelled to crouch or be forever cast out into utter darkness — by dogmatists whose sole method of making a living was by preaching what they knew. I admit myself that Flammarion speaks a strong language. But if the American people could lay aside all their avocations long enough to controvert or to uphold, as the case might be, just the first thirty-six pages of this book, the time consumed in the task would be *our* Age of Enlightenment. Still the book is glorious all the way through, including those pages that contain the translation of this great Frenchman with the significant name of "Flammarion" from this great German with the significant name of "Scheiner". It is such men as these that constitute the real *Lichtwerfer,* the *Leuchtkugeln,* of the age.

All of this paper could well have been devoted to Frank Heller's "The Emperor's Old Clothes" (Crowell), the very best detective story I have ever read. Frank Heller (Richard Hegel) had been writing novels all his life. He had portrayed brave men without ever having done a brave deed himself; he had depicted men in great danger though the risks of his own life had been minimal; he had sketched cowards though he himself was not cowardly; and he had written detective stories without having gone through any of the thrills an account of which sells the finished product. Tired of this second hand occupation, he came over from Sweden to Copenhagen and lived through the tale he has told. It is international; his characters are Swedish, Danish, Polish, American, English, French, and Chinese. I never wrote a detective story myself; but I do not see how it would be humanly possible to write a better one than this one. It abounds in gorgeous humor; it gets its personages into scrapes out of which the reader knows a priori that they cannot come alive, but they do; and it throws bright light, light such as cannot be thrown by the normal American, on the national traits of its many men and one woman.

Nor is it without its illuminating features from other points of view. Here is a description of Copenhagen:

> The whole world knows Copenhagen, — the merry, smiling, old-fashioned, hospitable city, the least arrogant of any metropolis, the capital of the middle-classes with their sound common sense, the city on the Sound with its red baroque houses, its green copper roofs, its slender towers.

That might be elaborated, but it cannot be improved upon. Indeed if the American people wish to learn of the relation of the sexes to each other, to hear of a really omnipotent God, and then to go in for diversion to the extent of seeing how a writer tries to experience what he writes, these three books can be recommended without reserve.

ALLEN W. PORTERFIELD

Notes from France

THERE is something of Louis-Quatorzian dignity and the solidity of Versailles architecture to be found in the "Life of Vauban" written by Daniel Halévy and published in his collection of the "Cahiers Verts" (Grasset).

Daniel Halévy, the son of Ludovic Halévy who wrote with Henri Meilhac the famous comedies and operettas of fifty years ago, is a "great citizen" in French literature. No flimsy Parisian humor about him. A friend and a collaborator of the late Charles

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Péguy, he is, in some respects, his continuator (the "Cahiers Verts" are like a new incarnation of the "Cahiers de la Quinzaine"). Halévy is deeply concerned with the political and ethical problems of the present. He is the author of the best "Life of Friedrich Nietzsche" I have read. This life of Maréchal de Vauban is a monument to certain French qualities which are often ignored. While the dash, the gaiety, the d'Artagnan-like heroism of the French soldier have been again and again commented upon, it was not until the last war that the steadfastness, the constructiveness, and above all the love for one's handiwork, shown by the French, were brought forward as being probably the outstanding virtues of the race. The works of Pierre Hamp insist on these points. Halévy, who stands very far from Hamp in politics, demonstrates the same facts in this book. Vauban is the man who, in the middle of the seventeenth century, built the hundreds of fortresses which remained until lately the basis of France's physical defense against invasions. Even during the last war, it could not be said that the Vauban fortifications had become entirely useless, as they sometimes afforded shelters which the infantry found ready at the most vital passes and points of vantage of the French territory.

Vauban's character, his method, his mixture of invincible honesty and indefatigable activity, his outspoken frankness with Louvois and with the King, often dangerous to himself, compose a portrait that one cannot forget. While St. Louis, Duguesclin, Guise, Condé, Marceau, Murat, correspond to special moments of French history and remain unique, there must have been many Vaubans, at each period, and his type seems as permanent as the rocks on which he built the forts that outline the profile of the country.

It is a great journey from this essentially masculine figure to the heroines of "Les Innocentes", by Comtesse de Noailles. There is often as much charm in the prose writings of poets as in their verses. Sometimes even more. The "Clara d'Ellébeuse" of Francis Jammes is not inferior to his best poems. The "Visage Emerveillé" by Comtesse de Noailles, written in prose, was not less admirable than her best lyrical works. Her new book contains pages of suprasensitive analysis. Her style never cools down to the ordinary temperature of prose. Any statement of hers contains lyricism, as the stones found on the slopes of volcanoes still belong, by their substance, to fire and the red chaos of great eruptions.

Flying again to another extreme, we meet "Le Bon Apôtre" by Philippe Soupault (Simon Kra, publisher), a significant novel of the newest generation. Soupault spent some time in the Dada movement, of which he was a leader, and whose great merit is that during its four years of existence it escaped all possible chance of being defined. This is no mean praise, if we remember that so many groups become as totally enshrined and imprisoned in their definitions as a worm in its cocoon. The cocoon Dada, being woven with imaginary threads, leaves plenty of space to escape. Soupault entered Dada, walked out, as a live blade goes through a ghost's body. If this shows Dada's innocuousness, it may also prove its futility.

But Soupault (now a coeditor of the "Revue Européenne") crossed more important currents than this one. Lautréamont and Max Jacob are to the best young writers what Laforgue

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and Gide were ten years before; that is, not exactly their "models" but the influences that give such a new, secret, and decisive twist to their styles. These are the epoch making influences, rather than those which result in a pure and simple relation of master and disciple. What gives a new generation its physiognomy is this "most secret advice" that it finds in works which it does not specifically intend to imitate; the reaction is deeper as it is not systematic, but based on spontaneous preferences and admirations.

"Le Bon Apôtre" is a sort of double diary wherein the author plays one of the parts openly, the other part covertly. Few exaggerations are really incredible in an epoch that witnessed the Great War and the following moral disorder. We should not be surprised by any contradiction, and novels will never catch up with actual life. So let us not dispute about the apparent absurdity of one episode or another, the impossibility of certain psychological reactions.

Decidedly, the young have been the kings of this literary season. Jacques Sindral is not the least astonishing example of early success, and even more surprising is perhaps the unanimous opinion in his favor. At twenty-three he was the author of a novel, "La Ville Ephémère", and of a substantial book on Franco-British relations, "La Crise des Alliances", which he signed with his real name: Alfred Fabre-Luce. Both the novel and the political study show an extraordinary amount of mature thought and a perfect inside knowledge of the motives of leaders and rulers. Certain characters in "La Ville Ephémère" are reminiscent of Stendhal's types in "La Chartreuse de Parme". As for "La Crise des Alliances", no student of contemporary events can afford to ignore that book, whose conclusions strangely resemble those of Washington's Farewell Address — the real, explicit ones, not the interpretations that modern political campaigns have tried to impose upon careless voters.

PIERRE DE LANUX

Cosmic Wonders and the First Arabian Nights

"THE Riddle of the Depths!" This fascinating title, "Rätsel der Tiefe", is that of a new and perhaps epoch making book by Dr. Hanns Fischer, published by Voigtländer, Leipzig. Dr. Fischer is the principal exponent of the Hörbiger theory of the Ice World, a theory which attempts to explain and account for the various glacial periods which the earth has undergone, and which attributes to these glacial periods the entire cultural development of our earth, and particularly the origin of one of our great vital necessities — coal. In Dr. Fischer's book, which is so written and illustrated with diagrams that any layman can follow his theories and arguments, a new and amazing hypothesis of the origin of our solar system is evolved and elaborated. According to this, to put the matter in its crudest form, our entire known universe is nothing more than the scattered fragments of a vast cosmic explosion, caused by the cohesion in space of a fiery lava world with a dead, frozen, water logged one. Absorbing, too, is his new theory of sun spots, which arise, as he demonstrates, from the eruption due to the penetration of ice meteors into the superheated masses of the sun's surface, the meteors acting like huge

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bombs and tearing great holes in the sphere.

The universe and its cosmic progressions shape themselves logically in accordance with the deductions from this ice theory, illumined by the author's unusually graphic and living style; Dr. Fischer proceeds to explain the occurrence of the glacial periods by the gradual approach of a former moon toward the earth, with resultant unthinkably enormous tidal waves. Dr. Fischer believes that the immemorial traditions of the Incas to account for the mysterious carvings in inaccessible spots in the Andes — that in ancient days in the time of the Great Water, their forefathers paddled their canoes about these summits — rest upon absolute fact, and that these legends treat of one of the primal floods. How these floods and the succeeding glacial period account for the coal deposits of the earth, must be read in the book itself. In addition to its great theoretical and scientific importance, the volume has a practical side; for Dr. Fischer claims to be able to circumvent the ever prevailing spectre of the miner, the firedamp explosion, and to locate coal and other deposits by new methods. He is completing another book devoted to the great deluges of tradition and their foundation in fact, and embracing the old problems which have so long intrigued the imagination of mankind — the lost Atlantis, Easter Island and its granite relics, and the truth behind the story of the Flood.

The film in its technical aspect and the possibilities of further developments in this promising infant industry are considerations occupying the mind of many a technician today. In a little work by Hugo Zehder, "Der Film von Morgen", published by the Rudolf Kaemmerer Verlag, Dresden, the problems, prospects, and tasks before the film of tomorrow are presented by experts on various branches. The book is an anthology, illuminating the modern film and the film to be from many sides; for instance, "Ethical Possibilities of the Film", "The Fantastic in the Film", "Film and Theatre", "Sociology of the Film", etc.

A very important book of political reminiscences just about to be published by Reimar Hobbing, Berlin, is "Erinnerungen" by the Russian statesman Suchomlinoff, the Ex-Minister of War. The rise and fall, the many great political changes, the numerous distinguished friends and acquaintances of this notable yet scaramouchish figure of the World War, are full of interesting moments. In telling his own story, Suchomlinoff, with his four wives and his easygoing financial methods, also exposes many another well known name. His greatest claim to be remembered in history is of course the fact that he was actually, as he confesses with a certain pride and humor, the man who pressed the button for Russia's general mobilization. It is interesting to note that the famous sanatorium of the "Weisser Hirsch" in Dresden took Suchomlinoff for some time as what the Germans call a *renommier-Gast*. That is, they advertised his presence and rendered him no bill. Suchomlinoff's entertaining autobiography is, oddly enough, printed for the first time in German.

The great collection of folk lore of the African continent, "Atlantis" (Diederichs, Jena), to which we recently referred, has saved a special sensation for its latest volume. Truly German! Any other country's publisher, instead of waiting until several had appeared, would certainly have secured the public ear and opened the

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public purse by printing as his first volume these "Fairy Tales from Kordofan", Arabian stories of great beauty and variety which contain, in the opinion of Leo Frobenius, the editor and collector of the series, the kernel story of the "Arabian Nights" in its original form. Frobenius finds high but not exaggerated praise for the beauty of this original version of a tale teller who saved a king and won a bride by his magic gift of telling wonder stories night after night, so that the priests forgot to watch the stars and augur the day of their king's sacrificial death. The strong feminist vein in these new "Arabian Nights" is most surprising in eastern stories; the daughters of the kings usually take fate in their own hands and choose a husband by tossing a kerchief to the elected lover. The romantic stories are remarkably pure. The section of humorous yarns contains really witty stories, most Rabelaisian in theme and texture, or rather in the vein of the "Decameron".

Grethlein (Leipzig) publish two important psychological works by Dr. Ludwig Frank, "Seelenleben und Rechtsprechung" and "Seelenleben und Erziehung". Psychology and the criminal, and psychology and the child — two most important and intricate departments in psychic study.

The same publishers issue a very finely written trilogy based on the life of Wagner. The three volumes, of which the last has just appeared, are entitled "Barrikaden", "Liebestod", and "Wahnfried". As the titles imply, the first treats of Wagner's years of struggle, the second of his passion for Cosima, the third of his achievement of the heights of fame and recognition.

An interesting "grotesquerie" by Fritz Gottwald, produced in Königsberg under the title "Dollar", has its scenes ostensibly laid in Russia, but only in order that the author may indulge his satirical and Mark Twainish wit without falling foul of indignant fellow countrymen. For this mad and comic dance round the almighty dollar-god displays exactly the same phenomena in Germany as in the author's fantasmal Russia.

Rainer Maria Rilke has written a new volume of verse, "Sonnets to Orpheus", which is said to mark a new phase in the ripening and development of the famous poet.

Gustav Krojanker has issued a collection of essays on modern authors, "Juden in der Literatur" (Welt Verlag, Berlin). The essays are interesting in themselves, but still more is the reflection, arising from a hasty survey, that the young intellect of Germany is largely Jewish or semi-Jewish.

Adam Karillon, a writer of quiet countryside books in "Cranford" style, who has just celebrated his seventieth birthday, has received the prize of honor for 1923 from the "Schiller Donation". The Eichendorff Prize for 1923 has been awarded to a Silesian, Willibald Köhler, for "Die Spiegelbrücke" (The Bridge of Mirrors).

ETHEL TALBOT SCHEFFAUER

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THE BOOKMAN'S LITERARY CLUB SERVICE

Believing that clubs will welcome an outline which combines range of subject with an authoritative understanding of the end to be achieved, the editors have brought together representative committees of authors, students, and critics to present for the use of women's clubs an outline which will contain both elements. The divisions of the series are: I. Contemporary American Fiction (see THE BOOKMAN *for October, November, December, January); II. Contemporary American Poetry (see* THE BOOKMAN *for March, April, May, June, July, August); III. Contemporary American Drama; IV. The Short Story. After contemporary American literature has been covered, programs on the historical background of our literature will be given and these will be followed by a survey of the English field.*

The BOOKMAN *programs are formed, not by the editors of this magazine but by a board of advice which has been organized to include names from various lines of literary thought in America, so that the result will represent no one group. The executive committee of advice is as follows: Mary Austin, the novelist; Dr. Arthur E. Bostwick, librarian of the St. Louis Public Library; Dr. Carl Van Doren, one of the editors of "The Century"; Hon. Maurice Francis Egan, diplomat and literary critic; Mrs. L. A. Miller, chairman of literature, General Federation of Women's Clubs; May Lamberton Becker, of the "Reader's Guide" of the New York "Evening Post"; Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, rector of the Church of the Divine Paternity, New York City; Booth Tarkington, the novelist; and Rose V. S. Berry, chairman of the fine arts committee, General Federation of Women's Clubs.*

The Editor of THE BOOKMAN *and his advisers and associates will answer promptly and to the best of their ability any question confronting any literary club. Such questions should be addressed "*THE BOOKMAN'S *Literary Club Service".*

WHEN we finished the poetry program we thought our difficulties were over. We were sure that the drama committee would agree quickly and painlessly. Such has not been the case. There seems to be no agreement in them. We have not yet been able to decide under what headings we shall group the dramatists' names, to say nothing of the names themselves. We are sorry to be obliged to apologize again for not presenting the drama outline on schedule time. Instead, we offer you a few miscellaneous programs.

THE following two letters were sent to an Alabama club woman in answer to her inquiries.

You say, "Please try to give the books that are free from sex problems." You will find on inspection of even the most elementary work on psychoanalysis that the Freudian hypothesis is based on sex problems of the most intimate and "unpleasant" kind. Far from disclaiming this, Freud has approached every year nearer to the position that sex is not only all-important but all there is. You cannot touch modern psychology at all without involving sex problems of the most complicated and intimate nature. "Anne Severn", which is on your list of excluded works, is mild compared to May Sinclair's earlier "The Romantic", which is pure Freud: "Cytherea" is not especially good literary art, but its psychology is sound and if it is psychology that you are studying it is excellent material. Studying modern psychology without getting into highly malodorous sex problems is like trying to study chemistry without smells. You would have to decide not so much which books you would avoid as whether you would avoid the subject altogether.

I am not in any great sympathy with the study of psychology or anything else "through fiction"; it is better to study a good text book on the subject and use the fiction for collateral reading. Novels are rarely written by specialists in science, and if you are dealing with a scientific subject you cannot get your facts too straight.

Wells's novel, "The Secret Places of the Heart", deals with psychoanalysis, but it is a very poor novel — also the morality leaves much to be desired. Walpole is all respectable and his latest, "The Cathedral",

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is an excellent study of egotistic love of power. "This Freedom" is not literature, psychology, or even the truth; Hutchinson has a remarkable power to set down exactly what people do and say and a complete inability to understand *why* they do and say it. If you are studying race problem literature, "Birthright" should be supplemented by Clement Wood's "Nigger".

Your letter opens a most interesting field for discussion: You ask for the name of a novel in which a man is "successful in living", and your comment shows that like me, you realize that the definition of success is one that varies considerably with the individual. However, suppose we take it to mean one whose life has been able to preserve its own inner rhythm — to put it perhaps too mystically, but I scarcely know how to say it better. A character in Sudermann's "Fires of St. John" says to the girl who has refused to marry him, "You may have spoiled my life — I am young, but perhaps it is true that you have done that. But one thing you have not spoiled; that is my life's melody. No one can do that save I myself." Taking success, then, to mean that a man has been able to hold his own ideals without compromise, I have recently read a novel by Arthur Somers Roche, "A More Honorable Man" (Macmillan), that seems to set forth this idea very clearly. The novels of William Allen White, especially "In the Heart of a Fool" (Macmillan), have the same idea. I think "Mr. Prohack" by Arnold Bennett (Doran) is a good example of a man who did pretty well with his life. Of course that does not mean that any of these are necessarily types for imitation by people who belong to other types.

English public school life novels are easier. The best is, I think, Alec Waugh's "The Loom of Youth" (Doran). This was written practically within the walls of such an educational institution — Waugh was under twenty — and created a great sensation in England.

For American novels of college life, I fear the most widely read is "This Side of Paradise" (Scribner); most of our college fiction is of a critical, not to say fault finding type, from "Stover at Yale" to this latest (and very poor) "The Barb" (Putnam). I am especially interested in "Town and Gown" by the Montrosses (Doran). This is the first and best of the novels about coeducational, state university life — a life all its own, and highly characteristic of America. I would choose this book — it is really a collection of novelettes — for your program rather than the earlier ones.

You ask for "any other good book" and I put down "Faint Perfume" by Zona Gale (Appleton) and "Conquistador" by Mrs. Gerould (Scribner) as the two that have lately most strongly roused my interest. Both are of the rather unusual length — that approximately of "Ethan Frome" — that has been used by some of the most artistic of contemporary fiction. In each of these is a psychological situation of deep interest, but what makes me so admire them — especially the latter — is the extraordinary beauty of their workmanship.

PERHAPS these suggestions to a club in Maine will be of some assistance to those wanting drama outlines before our detailed modern drama program is ready.

I am afraid it is a little difficult to make suggestions of much value for a paper on "Religion in Modern Drama" if you limit yourself to plays produced since 1914. Of course there have been many plays in which the religious convictions of the characters have influenced the course of the story, but few in which religion could be considered the theme.

Even the play "Thank You" which you mention — it is scarcely worth serious study — was more concerned with the economic difficulties of the churchman than with his spiritual problems. The generalization might be made that where the drama of the last ten years has touched on religion it has been casual or skeptical or flippant. That might be said to reflect the spirit of the time.

However, I should think it would be interesting to study the following plays with your topic in mind: "John Ferguson" by St. John Ervine; "Back to Methuselah" by George Bernard Shaw; "Liliom" by Franz Molnar; and "The Wandering Jew" by E. Temple Thurston. All these have been published, and you can get them through Brentano's.

Somerset Maugham's play, "East of Suez", recently produced, speaks quite bitterly of the smugness and hypocrisy of missionaries in the Orient; and his drama "Rain" does the same thing.

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IN THE BOOKMAN'S MAIL

MY DEAR MR. FARRAR:

THE BOOKMAN has many Jewish readers, a number of them keenly interested in Yiddish literature. The occasional articles that have appeared on that subject in your magazine have been appreciated by most of them. But Mr. Herbert S. Gorman's article in the June number, "Yiddish Literature, and the Case of Sholom Asch", has roused the ire or the scorn of not a few. They could not but wonder how such a collection of misstatements was permitted to enter the pages of so reputable a magazine as THE BOOKMAN.

Permit me, for the sake of truth, to point out some of the misstatements as they appear in the article. First, Sholom (Jacob) Abramovitch is known among his people not as "the Jewish Cervantes" but as "Mendele the Bookseller", his pseudonym. In only one of Abramovitch's novels, "The Travels of Benjamin III", is there to be found the influence of Cervantes; in the remainder of his work there is no resemblance whatsoever, and the phrase quoted by Mr. Gorman comes from a critic as unreliable as Mr. Gorman shows himself in his article. Second, the hodgepodge of names in the second paragraph is certainly "picked almost at random". To put "Shomer" (Nahum Meyer Schaikewitz) among the "group of younger people" is almost unpardonable. Schaikewitz's romances were read when Sholom Aleichem and Peretz were still children, and one of the first things Sholom Aleichem wrote was an attack on the stories of Schaikewitz. Third, to make the statement that "Hebrew today appears to be assuming that place that Latin occupied in early church history" in the face of the Hebrew revival in Palestine and in almost every country where Zionists are found, cannot but make the Jewish reader smile. Fourth, the coupling of Abraham Cahan and Sholom Asch (the first a lifelong Socialist) with the conservative "Jewish Morning Journal", is truly the joker of the article.

Mr. Gorman has treated Sholom Asch only superficially. His one general estimate of Asch concerns his supposedly deep seated Jewishness. He says: "The Jewish religion is an overwhelming part of his inspiration always." This will be news to most readers of Asch. It is true that Asch shows in his work a great love of the Jew. Only the Jew he loves is not the religious or the non-religious Jew one meets in the streets, the Jew found in the work of Sholom Aleichem and Peretz, but the Jew idealized in the image of Asch. This love sometimes reaches the point of sentimentality and often fools the uncritical. Asch the artist, on the contrary, is a true pagan. His god is not "The God of Vengeance" but "the god of earth", a primitive idol. He writes of the Jews because he knows them best. His Jews, however, are visualized artistically only when they reveal themselves as human, emotional beings. For Asch is great primarily as the depicter of human emotion.

The two elements that dominant in Asch are his naïveté and sensuousness. Most of his characters, especially his village folk, seem to grow out of the earth, and are never free from its beneficent influence. These same characters are also marked by their natural sensualness. Their voluptuousness becomes inoffensive only when they are regarded not as the Jews they outwardly are, but as the simple, pristine folk they were created to be.

CHARLES A. MADISON

DEAR EDITOR:

On reading with great interest the article, "The Starch of Puritanism", in THE BOOKMAN for last November, I feel impelled to correct the impression that it gives of Reverend Dr. Samuel Hanson Coxe. I think I have the right to do this, as I am his youngest and fifteenth child and remember well the days of the old and new school Presbyterians and what happy Sundays I had when my father was the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, New York. My two oldest brothers were sent, when little boys, to Dr. Fairchild's school, but later we all came to know and love him and dear "Auntie Fairchild" and her stone jar of famous cookies. My father was full of fun and repartee and so, often misunderstood and consequently misrepresented.

I remember my brother told me that when a little boy he wrote a Christmas carol and ventured to send it to a paper. It was published and when he came down to the breakfast table, he saw Father reading it. "Cleve, come here my son." Fearing a reprimand, he stole to Father's side, who put his arm about him and asked: "Did you write this?" The faint, "Yes, sir", was answered by, "You've done well, for twelve years."

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So it was, when he first told his father he wanted to go into the Episcopal Church. Father talked with him and when convinced of the strength of his purpose, advised him to see the Bishop and know the steps to be taken. It was after his second son went into the Church that his pride was hurt and his Presbyterian brethren did not help him, but on the contrary told him it was a disgrace and he became bitter for a time. Was it not a very natural thing? Can we blame him? But some small, narrow minds have always harped on it with no forgiveness in their small natures. Could the world know the love and beauty of the intercourse of that father and son, what a triumph it would be! I have seen the grand white head bowed, asking for the "Apostolic benediction" and Bishop Coxe on his knees to receive his father's blessing.

These precious memories are never to be forgotten — many too sacred for the public — but I, Dr. Coxe's last and youngest child, feel that I cannot do less than write the truth, as I have tried to do.

M. C. B.

To the Editor of The Bookman:

In 1914 when I published "Songs for the New Age" some of the critics pointed out that I had ceased to be a poet after writing "Monday Morning and Other Poems" (1909) and gave as a reason that I had now come under the influence of psychoanalysis. William Rose Benét, in his review of "Golden Bird" in the July Bookman, revives this point of view; only he advances the dates. It appears now that "Songs for the New Age" is my only book of real excellence, because it belongs to "the period before psychoanalysis set in". I have been ruined so many times by psychoanalysis, according to the critics, that I think the day has come to get the moment of my downfall historically fixed. I was deep in psychoanalysis three years before I wrote "Songs for the New Age", and it was not until I wrote "The Mystic Warrior" that the experience was fully assimilated; so that when I came to "Golden Bird" the artist quite put the analyst behind. What Mr. Benét means is that he likes my psychoanalytic poetry better than he likes my poetry, for "Songs for the New Age" was as directly under the influence of a great new science as the "Divine Comedy" was under the influence of a great religion.

James Oppenheim

Dear Mr. Farrar:

Reading Carl Sandburg and a few of the other
Star gazing bums
I'm beginning to think this business
Of writing poetry is easy.
Get an inkpot — dribble around in it
With a pen— glare at it with a kind of
Sponge-like Melancholy. What to say?
Inkpots are full of half drowned inspirations —
Drift awhile — here's a thought — we're all little drops of ink
On the pen point of the Almighty Scribbler
To be scrawled across the pages of Life or
To be flipped back ignominiously into that
Eternal slopjar of black fluid — not bad —
Why should a man die of hunger?
Drifting again? — ah, here's another one,
People buying silk socks at a bargain in a department store
Because some dazed operator turned his head for a second
And the machine skipped a stitch!
Children in a garden, picking flowers,
Crushing vermilion petals with their little *white fingers;*
Even the Innocents can be brutal.

Impressionistic poetry! is that what you call it?
Like the paintings of those twitch bitten Frenchmen
Who stop suddenly and start something else —
But I forget, genius can see things sooner than
The poor popeyed bucolic. Skinny fiddlers
In dark stuffy movie houses, playing cheap violins
Whilst Orpheus turns over in his grave.
Damn this bony white steed of Ichabod's,
Pegasus, thy tail should be filled with stiffer hair.

Say Farrar is there any money in it?

M. S. Rosenblatt

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THE GOSSIP SHOP

IN announcing our "Children's Book Week Essay Contest" we hope that even more children will contribute this year than for the past two years. For the ten best essays written by boys or girls fifteen years or under, THE BOOKMAN offers ten prizes: first, twenty-five dollars in cash; second, ten dollars' worth of books; and one book each for the other eight. Two of the best essays received before October 15 will be published in the Christmas number. The announcement of prize awards and the first and second prize winning essays themselves will be published in the January number. The subject for this year will be "A Book Play". Who are the ten or twelve characters from books that you have read who would fit well into a play? Choose your characters and write a brief synopsis of the play, giving some of the dialogue if you like. If this does not please you, write an essay or story on any subject you please, not necessarily connected with books — with life, with school or play or nature. Contributions must be not less than three hundred or more than eight hundred words in length, must be written in ink on one side of the paper only, must have name, age, and address of the contestant in the upper right hand corner, and be addressed to "Children's Book Week Essay Contest" in care of THE BOOKMAN. The statement of a parent or teacher vouching for the originality of the composition must accompany each paper. Manuscripts must be mailed to reach the BOOKMAN office no later than November 1.

Charles Dickens's last home, Gad's Hill Place, Higham, near Rochester, has been offered for sale in London and withdrawn at five thousand pounds. This means that the house might be acquired for a reasonable figure — which five thousand is certainly not, when one considers that thirty years ago the present owner paid three thousand and has contributed to it several hundred pounds' worth of improvements. Here again we have one of those literary shrines which really ought to pass into the possession of the nation. We would therefore suggest that some Dickensian of means — an American, perhaps, who wishes to prove to the country across the water that his interest in the relics of the great novelist is not restricted to those he can carry back home with him — could express his devotion to the great novelist in no better way than by purchasing Gad's Hill Place. He might entrust it to, say, the Royal Literary Society, possibly to be used as a convalescent home for invalid or disabled writers, or as a country retreat for members of the writing profession who would be glad of the assurance that their holiday was to be spent in congenial company and surroundings. A few days since we were the guest of Mrs. Latham, the present owner of the house; and the excellent condition of the buildings (erected in the eighteenth century), the extent of the surrounding acres, and the beautiful Kentish neighborhood surprised and delighted us. The house stands exactly as it did in Dickens's day, with the famous Falstaff tavern on the

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other side of the Dover Road. In the study we were pleased to find preserved the imitation bookshelves which Dickens fitted up with dummy rows of books whose facetious titles are listed by Forster in the "Life". They include "Cat's Lives in Nine Volumes" and "The Wisdom of Our Ancestors: Volume One, The Rack. Volume Two, The Thumbscrew." In the beautiful old garden, whose lawns were trodden at one time or another by many a famous man, including Lord Lytton and Wilkie Collins, still stands the little grave of Dick, the great novelist's favorite bird.

There is something more than usually interesting in the study of a man who has written over a hundred plays, many of them successful, who has varied his style all the way from violently sentimental melodrama to the Pulitzer Prize winning realistic drama "Icebound". Owen Davis is a genial, pleasant mannered gentleman, who is very fond of his growing boys and lives with his family in the suburbs. He was born in Maine, educated in the south and at Harvard. He has two great gifts: a sense of theatre and a sense of people. He understands how to put his people across the footlights. His faults as a playwright have often enough been noted. He has, perhaps, too great a feeling that action is the prime necessity for drama. His climax is often too elaborately prepared, too strenuously executed. Davis at a rehearsal of one of his own plays is quiet, observant, unperturbed. He consults his director occasionally, sits by himself, watching. Very seldom, now, does he change a line. It would seem, wouldn't it, that after years of such close contact with the stage, after page on page of dramatic writing had flitted through his fingers, no situation could come to him that would seem fresh, no scene be handled with enthusiasm. Yet this is not so. He is as interested in

Owen Davis

each new scene as he appears to be in each new moment of life. He has written two fine plays in the past two years and one not quite so fine. There is certainly no other living American playwright to rank with him except Eugene O'Neill.

These bright days are almost like October. They fill one with a bewildering sense of the summer's flight — and only one fish caught: that, too, a perch (but *what* a perch!). Murray Hill has become a bedlam of sturdily and noisily arising buildings. Yet even this source of spumings, spurtings, and strummings has its touches of amusement. What pedestrian so

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languorous that he has not seen the tall Irish gentleman who balances on steel beams swinging over the street, in a *tall silk hat*. Our friend Dr. Collins would doubtless call him an exhibitionist; but we find him a true comedian who chooses to jest with the gods while he flirts with death. Then, too, there is the bugler, who is tattered and forlorn. From what quarter he appears, we scarcely know; but there he is, on the corner of Thirty-eighth Street, blowing wanly a hymn tune. He is Gabriel turned tramp, an undoubted angel with a swollen lip and innumerable patches. Then, there is the question which has been puzzling us for days as to just what is happening to the roof of Dr. Rosenbach's emporium of super rare books. We can see it from here. A structure is being built there — half copper, half glass. It looks as though it might be either a conservatory or a swimming pool. We don't like to enter the imposing door, accost the rotund doctor, and say, "Just *what* is that on your roof?" So we must remain curious. We spoke the other day at Station WEAF for that remote and supposedly huge radio audience. We cannot resist publishing a part of one letter: "Your voice was so kindly", the lady writes, "and uneffective (!!). I was picturing in my mind how you looked when you came to the book, 'Flaming Youth', and you said you didn't like it. I was so glad to know that there was left a man who didn't think in what is called, the modern way, in regard to those things —" And then, of course, she knew *exactly* how we looked. Another experience that whiled away one of the few unoccupied hours for us this month was having a moving picture test made of ourself. We decided that the best way to learn about motion picture directors was to be directed by one — so we took steps. We suspect we were pretty terrible before the camera. Yet it was fun, being plastered with white and purple grease paint, endowed with a floppy wig, and grimacing wildly while the camera clicked and our good friend Frank Tuttle shouted, "That's the boy! Believe it! Believe it!"

"What, have you never read 'Arabia Deserta'? Why, it's the greatest travel book ever written!" This glowing exclamation was made a little time ago by John Freeman, the English poet, at W. H. Davies's fireside in Bloomsbury, and we recalled it when that enterprising publisher Jonathan Cape told us that a cheaper edition of "Arabia Deserta" will appear in the autumn. This is good news for the impecunious reader, for the two volumes could not be acquired for a penny less than eight guineas. The new and revised edition of Doughty's poem "Mansoul" has also been eagerly bought up by the collectors, despite that the net price is a guinea, whereas the first edition was not more than six shillings. Charles M. Doughty's activities would suggest that he is a youngish man, which indeed he is — in spirit. Actually, however, he is between seventy and eighty years of age, and lives quietly with his family in Sussex.

Lady poets have always terrified us. We are humble before Amy Lowell; we are speechless before Edna St. Vincent Millay; we are shy before Sara Teasdale; we are mischievous before Leonora Speyer. But before Margaret Widdemer we are possessed of a sense of ease. She is a person of drawing room graces. She does not seem like a poetess. She is

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neither startlingly brilliant in her conversation, nor is she distressingly shy. She is, to use an Edgar A. Guest phrase, "just home folks". Miss Widdemer has written several novels in the past; but her publishers are hoping for great things from "Graven Image", which, for some occult reason, Miss Widdemer went to Hollywood, California, to write. She has returned now and is doubtless writing rhymes again. Another point worthy of note concerning Margaret Widdemer is that she has a sense of humor. Have you ever read her parodies?

Margaret Widdemer

"Time", the weekly news magazine, is a particular pet of ours. Our editor contributes to it. *Its* editors are old friends of ours. We find it a good means of keeping up intelligently with the course of world affairs, and we are happy to tell you that after its first trial half year it is growing in a healthy and prosperous fashion. George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken are to edit a new magazine. Alfred A. Knopf will be their publisher. The magazine will be called "The American Mercury". Needless to say, most of us will read this monthly review. Mr. Knopf tells us that he has prepared his announcement with great care and would appreciate our use of it as prepared. Voilà:

> The aim of THE AMERICAN MERCURY will be to offer a comprehensive picture, critically presented, of the entire American scene. It will not confine itself to the fine arts; in addition, there will be constant consideration of American politics, American governmental problems, American industrial and social relations, and American science. The point of view that it will seek to maintain will be that of the civilized minority. It will strive, at all times, to avoid succumbing to the current platitudes, and one of its fundamental purposes will be to discover and develop writers in all fields competent to attack those platitudes in a realistic and effective manner
>
> THE AMERICAN MERCURY will begin with a distinguished list of collaborators, both at home and abroad. It hopes, at all times, to enlist the best European talent, but, as its name indicates, it will lay chief stress upon American concerns. There is an English MERCURY, there is a MERCURE DE FRANCE and in Germany a NEUE MERKUR; the new review will endeavor to present the best features of all these magazines, and in addition it will seek to go further. It is not presented as a rival to any existing American review. It will cover a larger ground than any of them, and it will diligently avoid the formal thinking that characterizes most of them. No cult or tendency will dominate its pages. It will be open to conflicts of opinion at all times, so long as those conflicts avoid sham
>
> THE AMERICAN MERCURY will print notices of all important new books, not only in *belles lettres*, but in all other fields that the educated reader may comfortably enter. It will also cover the theatre, whenever the theatre is interesting. The names of the editors offer assurance that, whatever its deficiencies otherwise, it will never be obvious or dull. First and last, its central effort will be to combat all pedantry and pretense, to encourage sound and original work in all intellectual departments, and to offer a quick welcome and hearing to men and women capable of it

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The reviews of reviews are becoming more and more interesting, so

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much so that we sit us down with pen and paper to answer each one. It is a most stimulating occupation. We should like our readers to criticize other reviews, too, than those in THE BOOKMAN. We are still forced to demand brevity. Three splendid pieces of writing were forced out this month because of length. We are now, therefore, weakening to this extent — the length of these reviews from now on, may be three hundred words. The prize for November will be a copy of John Buchan's "Midwinter". This month's award goes to Clara Wilson of Alameda, California, and in spite of the fact that she is a bit sarcastic about our editor. We have our own opinions concerning J. F.'s naïveté.

Hugh Walpole in one of his San Francisco lectures said that, to make a good book, the three elements of author, book and reader had to be in harmony. It seems to me that the reason the editor of THE BOOKMAN in "The Editor Recommends—" criticizes "West of the Water Tower" so severely is because the book needs a reader who is, or who has been, naïve and Mr. Farrar dwells in high places where naïveté is a lost quality.

I consider the book very poorly done as far as the grammatical construction goes; also, several incidents in the story seem decidedly far fetched. The book *doesn't* contain a single memorable line, a face raised to beauty, or a great description; but the love affair, the robbery and the mother love shown by Bee are beautiful with the beauty that drags many weak people into trouble.

I intend to have my children read "West of the Water Tower" because I want them to realize that some "sex matter" isn't really beautiful and doesn't add to a life story. To compare "The Cathedral" and "West of the Water Tower" seems humorous to me and the "Little Johnny" stuff a bit unapt as Guy and Bee both knew about sex but they took a chance and, being naïve, they hoped by prayer and love to weave a charm that would fool natural law. The idea of Bee and Guy marrying after eight years, two deaths, a lost church, six months on the rock pile and a broken engagement delights me and I hope, in the world where characters begot by careless authors go to finish up the lives cut off by the once more careless authors, Guy will become, at least, a State Senator.

We can scarcely hope to compete with the prizes of one thousand dollars offered through Robert M. McBride and Company for reviews of "Ashes of Vengeance" (motion picture and book). To this competition, however, we heartily commend our readers.

Eugene O'Neill is one of those authors who refuse to be found. We suspect that he is in Provincetown now, writing three or four new plays. That "The Fountain" is to be produced soon we know; for we hear that Romeyn Benjamin who, as an amateur, once played a part in a play of ours, is to tread the boards in it. Fritz Liebler is to play the leading rôle, all about how Ponce de Leon searched and searched and searched for youth before ever there was a "Black Oxen". We can think of no figure in American letters who has so

Eugene O'Neill

quickly won the unqualified praise of critics, and whose reputation is so

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firmly entrenched here, in England and on the Continent. It proves, doesn't it, that a certain type of genius is universal and immediately recognizable. You would feel this quality in O'Neill if you met him. He shares it with John Masefield. It is a great sense of beauty and of tragedy, of love for man, and of pity for him.

No, the irresistible "Max" has a warm place yet in the affections of London. The black marks for disloyalty and irreverence which some folk have been chalking up so vigorously against him will count for very little to those who prefer to recall the unique charm of his writings, and the disarming impishness of the majority of his drawings and cartoons. We have just turned up a letter which we received from Max Beerbohm a few years ago in which he hastened to correct an assumption made in a review that his famous story of Enoch Soames in "Seven Men" had for its original the unfortunate Ernest Dowson. "I didn't draw E. S. from anybody", he wrote, in evident discomfort that we should think poor Dowson was the butt of his fun. "I ventured to invent him, and having done so I ventured to adorn him with this and that slight point of resemblance to several persons — quite half a dozen — whom I knew in the nineties. Never will I reveal who those persons were . . . Enough that E. D. was not one of them." He went on to say in his characteristic fashion that he never, as a matter of fact, met Dowson — never even set eyes on him. "Of course I knew many people who knew him. But from what they told me of him I gather that he was a particularly modest and amiable young man; which E. S. was not. . . . It's true that both Dowson and Soames went often to the domino room of the Café Royal, and drank overmuch absinthe, and it's true that both of them (in reality and imagination) were drawn by Will Rothenstein in Glebe-place, Chelsea. But very many of the poets of that period drank overmuch absinthe at the Café Royal, and very few of them didn't sooner or later get drawn by Will Rothenstein (who cast his net very wide in those days). So please mix no more the dust of E. S. with the ashes of E. D." We were glad, naturally, to get Beerbohm's letter, even though it took the ground from under our critical feet. And forthwith we read the story over again. A little masterpiece that story is, if ever story was. But, strange to relate, in spite of all the author's persuasiveness, the figure of Ernest Dowson came before us more vividly than ever! — although we have never dared to say so to "Max".

Into the Gossip Shop this month from here and from there have drifted a motley array of folk. Here was Robert C. Benchley preparing to go on the stage in "The Music Box Revue", holding a bundle of proofs of his new book under one arm and a copy of "Life" in the other. Here was John Drury, the poet bookseller of Chicago, back from a sea voyage as a mess boy, having had many a gory experience; on his way back to Chicago again to write him a novel. The inspiration for his voyage he credited to young Milton Raison who, by the way, seems to have gone off voyaging again. For the first time we met Laurence Stallings, whose scintillating reviews of plays and books have been attracting attention in the New York "World". He is a brilliant conversationalist, young Mr. Stallings, a hero of the war, modest, quiet; but as viv-

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idly possessed of ideas as anyone we have seen of recent date. Robert Frost, come to town for a few days, is returning, he told us, to Amherst in the autumn — a noble, quiet, splendid figure as always. In the distance we have occasionally seen the florid, lank, white haired Carl Van Vechten, observing life with narrowed quizzical eyes and speculating avidly as to its secret sins. On the tennis courts we encountered Edna St. Vincent Millay's husband, Eugene Boissevain, tall, stalwart, a trifle dreamy eyed. Miss Millay, still secluded in Croton, is recovering from a recent operation for appendicitis but, according to rumor, again writing poetry. We were glad to welcome Donald Ogden Stewart, seriously inclined as usual, planning to write a novel, having just completed his satirical "Aunt Polly's Story of Mankind". A flash of eyes and a flip of feet — that was Nita Naldi, back from the coast and the filming of Cecil B. De Mille's "The Ten Commandments", ready to start work on Julian Street's "Rita Coventry". She talks, when she wishes, in a curious high light voice, English accent. We forgot to ask her in which commandment it was she appeared. Wallace Irwin we saw, recovering from illness, subsisting on a diet of what he calls "rabbit's food" and very much absorbed in the writing of his novel to follow the recent "Lew Tyler's Wives". And Mrs. Wallace Irwin, ably overseeing his diet. Our publisher, George H. Doran, came back from England with the good news that Frank Swinnerton, under the management of Louis J. Alber, will make a lecture tour of the United States this autumn. Presently everyone will be back again in town, life will resume its natural course, the MacDowell Colony will let loose its flock of resting writers on the dreaming town, and literature will again be under way.

Among the new poetry magazines, or rather, perhaps, the newer ones, we want especially to note Harold Vinal's "Voices" in its new format — a beautifully arranged and printed magazine, this, which contains verse of a rather quieter type than many of the others. The poetry in the July magazines seemed to us better than usual. There was the striking "The Miller's Youngest Daughter" by Grace Fallow Norton in "Poetry"; "For Wisdom" by Robert Nathan in "The Reviewer"; "Europa" by Charles D. Christoph in "The Atlantic Monthly"; "Daphne" by Hildegarde Flanner in "The Yale Review"; "The Autumn Horsemen" by John Gould Fletcher in "The Measure"; and "Primum Mobile" by William Rose Benét in "The New Republic".

Art exhibits are, for obvious reasons, scarcer in summer than in other seasons — the rhyme was unintentional. Therefore to have obtained a thrill from one of them would be cause for gratitude, particularly since there were so few thrills elsewhere, all our friends being away from New York, and the new plays and movies not being such that we were tempted into any riotous spending of our salary. Knoedler's was a real disappointment. The pictures were extremely conventional, good but not at all the type to get one excited on a hot summer day (which was probably entirely commendable). We wished they had placed a later Sargent beside the evidently early portrait — it would have proved an interesting study and we haven't the faintest idea what our conclusions would have been. But we did get a thrill from the modern etch-

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ings. A few well chosen lines expressed great beauty, particularly in Zella de Milhau's "Ebb Tide", where all the peace of after sunset was held complete by the few lines which showed the fish nets and the water rippling on the shore. The Macbeth Gallery showed pictures conventional but more modern and appealing. How lovely Bruce Crane, Emil Carlsen, Ranger, and Ryder can be. As for Francis Murphy's soft golden tones, we found ourself branching, mentally, into interior decoration, planning rooms around these pictures and making quite a success of it — mentally. For the pictures at Macbeth's were the kind that would quietly grace one's living room walls.

So many young short story writers have claimed the mantle lately put aside forever by Katherine Mansfield that one hesitates to suggest another candidate for the honors of that branch of art in England. But for our own part we have always been partial to A. E. Coppard, and it is very satisfactory to learn from Alfred A. Knopf that he is about to get his chance in New York, and also that Jonathan Cape is publishing a new volume, "The Black Dog", in England immediately. Hitherto Coppard's work has been issued from Waltham St. Lawrence, in Berkshire, by a brave little venture called the Golden Cockerel Press. Already he has, of course, a select but highly appreciative circle of readers on either side the Atlantic, and those who have read "Adam and Eve and Pinch Me" and "Clorinda Walks in Heaven" — delectable titles! — will not easily forget their breadth and charm. A quality of earthiness is present in all his best stories that sets him apart, I think, from all other writers in his kind. He lives away in the Thames Valley, near Henley; in a sense he is a hermit — if one who enjoys life with immense gusto can be called a hermit. And he rarely goes to London, preferring to while away his days in a tiny cottage at the edge of a lonely wood.

President Harding's death deeply grieved us. He was, it seems to us, the most thoroughly *trusted* by the people at large of any president in our time. Every citizen has felt a great personal loss. For us, the saddest news of recent weeks was of the death of Kate Douglas Wiggin (Mrs. George Riggs). She died in Harrow, England. Only several evenings before she sailed, we saw her, a vivid, energetic, smiling figure, in flowing silks. She was not well then and had made a great effort to come to dinner in order to greet her friends and to say goodby to them before she sailed. She was a woman of graciousness and charm. Her life was devoted to her friends and to children to whom she loved to tell stories, stories known the world over. Not unlike Mrs. Riggs was the veteran Louis Calvert, actor, producer, playwright, author. His influence on the theatre both in England and America has been marked. He will be remembered by American audiences, and by the countless young people he helped and advised, with deep affection. Louis Couperus, the great Dutch novelist, died recently. Although a native of Holland, he was of Scotch ancestry. The translation of his novel "Peace" is announced for issue here next year.

Last year when we began to write first night gossip, we remember Alexander Woollcott's remarking, "Heavens, how naïve you are about it!" So we were. We wish we were a bit

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more so now; for as one sees the same crowd now and again, faces do not surprise one so. At the first night of "Tweedles" we saw Julian Street and family, talking, as we recall, with Alice Duer Miller in a box. Here, too, was Mrs. Otis Skinner (whose daughter Cornelia appears, and is gorgeous to look upon, in the play). And Gladys Unger, who is soon to have another play on Broadway, clad in bright heliotrope. At "The Breaking Point" our own publisher in a box, and ourself so far forward that we could really tell not at all at all who was there. At "Magnolia", Jesse Lasky, on for a brief visit from the coast; Prince Bibesco, quite by himself, so far as we could judge; Ray Long and Carl Hovey of the Hearst organization, with their respective wives, etc., etc. We wish that we could always see first nights as we saw that of "The Mad Honeymoon" — not first nights *like* "The Mad Honeymoon", however. The intrepid Dr. Collins, either wanting to observe our peculiar behavior, or thinking we needed a rest, had taken us off for a weekend on the "Seal", a thirty foot schooner with a most engaging skipper who cooks admirable meals. Around and about the Sound we cruised, while the doctor read proofs of Fannie Hurst's "Lummox" and we lay about being burned to a crisp on the deck. Presently we dropped anchor in Stamford harbor, rowed to shore, and saw "The Mad Honeymoon". Now that *was* a first night.

It has been known for a long time in London that "The English Review" was on the market, and now that a member of the House of Commons has bought it we have been made to realize with quite a shock that the change in ownership has meant the disappearance of Austin Harrison from the editorial chair. We can pay no higher tribute to Harrison than to say that when he commissioned a young author with whom we are intimately acquainted to contribute a signed article each month for a couple of years it was realized by the aforesaid young author only too well that he did so not because those signed articles were more necessary than anybody else's in his pages, but because he saw in him a struggling author to whom he could give a helping hand. Harrison's hand has helped many an author in ways just as characteristic. The younger and less orthodox of the English poets especially will be the poorer for his retirement. May Sinclair, the novelist, once expressed to us the opinion that Harrison is the best of living publicists in his own country, and we would add that during his twelve years' editorship of the review he has certainly shown himself one of the pluckiest. Above all, he was the first editor to give hospitality to John Masefield. He printed "The Everlasting Mercy", with, as Harrison says in his farewell editorial, "its hundred 'bloodies' ".

D. H. Lawrence has been in New York City. Apparently everyone in the world has met him but ourself. We suppose that is only right and proper, since we have obviously never worshiped at the Lawrence shrine, though believing that "Sons and Lovers" is one of the finest novels of the decade. However, be that as it may, Lawrence is apparently a gentleman to cause anything but quiet wherever he goes. We hear of hot arguments with F.P.A. and John Macy. We hear that he talks brilliantly when indulg-

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ing in generalities, but when brought to a position of defense on particular points, flounders engagingly. Lawrence, we understand, believes that

D. H. Lawrence

European literature is dead; that there is a chance for us Americans if we are very careful and reform according to the Lawrence formula. The Lawrence approach to America was interesting. It was only after months in New Mexico and California that he permitted himself, or was permitted, the limelight of New York City — and then, only in the summer season. We should like to have met D. H. Lawrence. From what we have heard of him, we should probably like him personally; but we judge that we are one of those from whom he is protected.

We were wise enough in our youth to acquire a copy of "The Hill of Dreams", that weird fantastical romance by Arthur Machen. We hear that our wisdom is to be rewarded, for all sorts of prices are soon to be offered for his early books. This, one supposes, is a consequence of the publication of the "Caerlon" collected edition of Machen's works, each of the nine volumes of which is signed by the author, only 750 sets being printed for sale in England and in America. Until recently Machen was a familiar figure in Fleet Street journalism, entering the portals of Carmelite House with a fine dignity in a striking past century dress that made one think of Cavaliers and Roundheads, for it included a wide brimmed hat and flowing black cape. His name, by the way, is pronounced "Makken". He is a stylist of letters who can write of the Holy Grail and of golden syrup pudding with the same literary charm and mystic fervor. Many of Machen's fellow journalists will be glad to know that he is at last coming into his own, for the fates have been slow in bestowing recognition on him. Some of the younger men swear by him. This tardy recognition, despite her recent series of successes, has been shared to some extent by Sheila Kaye-Smith, for we must not forget that her first novel, "The Tramping Methodist", was published in 1908. Few people seem aware that the author of "The End of the House of Alard" is a poet as well as novelist, but this state of things is to be remedied. We are told that a limited edition of the poems written before she became a novelist is shortly to appear.

Recently the editor of THE BOOKMAN was asked to give a list of seventeen authors who he considered represented the highest artistic achievement of living writers of the novel in America. Now we do not approve of lists. We aren't sure that this is a good list. Here it is: Sherwood Anderson, Mary Austin, Alice Brown, Dorothy Canfield, Willa Cather, Winston Churchill, Floyd Dell, Theodore Dreiser, Henry B. Fuller, Hamlin Gar-

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land, Ellen Glasgow, Joseph Hergesheimer, Sinclair Lewis, Kathleen Norris, Booth Tarkington, Edith Wharton, Harry Leon Wilson. In making this list, the editor insisted that he was influenced neither by the French nor the Italian critics; nor by Messrs. Spingarn, Mencken and Sherman; but that like every man on the street (whether he knows it or not) he has some sort of artistic creed, nebulous enough, no doubt. These authors, he claims, in at least *one* of their books, approach the tenets of that creed. If this is a patronizing attitude, it is patronizing. We, ourself, read Zane Grey and E. Phillips Oppenheim and we enjoy what they have given us — pleasure, if not profit. Their books represent solid achievement, if solid achievement is the ability to tell a story — but Ethel M. Dell is another matter. Grey and Oppenheim have a gift of the fantastic as related to life. Everyone *knows* when he reads those yarns that life isn't that way. Miss Dell *pretends* that life is as she writes of it. We do not insist on the happy ending — we hate 'em in the theatre — but the artistic ending must be a logical working out of a story. The happy ending that is too obvious is not art. Whenever the mechanism of plot or of technique sticks out above a story, it doesn't seem to us to be art. After all, what do we know about it? It's quite on the cards that Gene Stratton-Porter is the greatest artist America has ever produced — only, we don't think so. Do you?

For those who love books and want to sell them the Women's National Book Association is offering a course of ten lectures, from October 15 to 26. Besides the discussion of books there will be practical talks on sales psychology and allied subjects. Among the speakers are Marion Dodd of the Hampshire Bookshop in Northampton, Frederic G. Melcher of "The Publishers' Weekly", Professor John B. Watson, the psychologist, Margaret Jackson, recently on the staff of the New York Library School, and other familiar names which space does not permit printing here. This new departure — a general preliminary course has never before been given — has arisen from the increasing number of inquiries the bookshops have had from women in all stations of life who wish to sell books, particularly during the Christmas season. Marian Cutter is taking charge of the enrolment at the Children's Bookshop in New York City. Naturally we feel a brotherly interest in the enterprise.

Ridley Wills and Allen Tate are two more sane young men posing as a trifle mad who, living in the south, have of late found self-expression in the publication of "The Golden Mean and Other Poems" in a limited edition of two hundred copies. We once saw Ridley Wills. We have never seen Allen Tate. Perhaps, after all, they are the same person. At any rate, they indite glowing tributes to each other somewhat in the following vein:

From "In Defense of Suicide" (To Allen Tate) by Ridley Wills:

Vishnu is a Strabismatic Simian,
Exhaling indignation for all excellence,
Smoking resentment for palpable superiority.

From "In Defense of Suicide" (To Ridley Wills) by Allen Tate:

In the ultra-violet midnight, when the heart
remembers what the mind cannot forget,
I walk, chased by Furies, and I stagger
Simultaneously withdrawing my rubber dagger*
and hypnotize grief with histrionic art
which satisfies the average woman yet.

*A stage property, but nonetheless efficacious.

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Author of "The Woman Thou Gavest Me," "The Christian," etc.

A poignantly beautiful novel of a great love, frustrated at every turn by humanity's most acute problem today. "In my opinion the most powerful and dramatic story he has written," says a prominent critic. $1.75

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The culminating swirl of startling situations will assuredly keep the reader's interest at a high degree of excitement."—*New York Times.* $2.00

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One of the best loved of children's books in a beautiful edition with full-page illustrations in color and in black and white by Katharine Pyle. $2.50

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